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CHRONICLES OF CULTURE

LETTERS & ARTS MORALS & MANNERS

Ronald Berman
Eugene Ionesco
Thomas Molnar
Anthony Powell

Literature and the Real Person

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Contents

Comment

4 Subversion at the NEH? Richard Kostelanetz

Opinions & Views

6 Scandalizing Uncle Ez Brian Murray
—E. Fuller Torrey: *The Roots of Treason: Ezra Pound and the Secret of St. Elizabeths*

8 The Critical Temper Ronald Berman
—David Bromwich: *Hazlitt: The Mind of a Critic*
—Ronald Bush: *T. S. Eliot: A Study in Character and Style*

11 Fuzzy Focus & Clear Vision Henry L. Mason III
—Jonathan Steele: *Soviet Power: The Kremlin's Foreign Policy—Brezhnev to Andropov*
—*The Soviet Union Today: An Interpretive Guide*; Edited by James Cracraft

13 Making a Morass of Metaphysics Bryce J. Christensen
—Fred Kaplan: *Thomas Carlyle*

16 Unclassical Tragedy Todd G. Buccholz
—Bob Woodward: *Wired: The Short Times & Fast Life of John Belushi*

Essays

18 Literature and the Real Person Anthony Powell

23 Truth Dwells in the Imaginary Eugene Ionesco

Commendables

26 Old Answers to Old Questions: Phyllis Zagano
Religious Schooling in America
Putting Down Uncle Pat: Arthur E. Hippler
The Persistent Prejudice

27 Required Reading: *Required Writing*

In Focus

28 Beyond the Norm—and Back: *Heretics of Dune*
Useless Idiots: *The History and Impact of Marxist-Leninist Organizational Theory*
Foreign Fiascoes: *Endless Enemies*

Waste of Money

29 Misunderstanding Nazism: *Reflections of Nazism*

30 Nest of Vipers: *Adieux*
Success by Association: *The Structure of Obscurity*

Screen

32 Filming for Dollars: *Zanuck* Stephen Macaulay
Reconstructing the Bostonians: *The Bostonians* Herbert London

Correspondence

34 Letter from Budapest Thomas Molnar

Polemics & Exchanges

36 Neutered Conservatism Jay Williamson
Prof. Steensma Replies

37 Who Cares? Harry Zoylus

The American Proscenium

37 Caveat Emptor
Commedia dell'Arte

Journalism

39 Out of the Closet, Into the Street

Notables

5 Impenitence: *Josephine Herbst*

22 Fugue of Myself: *The Nightmare of Reason*

31 The Incomplete Man: *James Agee*

Confluences

7 Pound's Pupil

20 A Conversation With Anthony Powell

Liberal Culture

10 Entrepreneurial Metaphysics

33 More Fun Than an Oil Spill

In the Mail/17, 25

38 **And the Winners Are . . .**

Vol. 8, No. 12 December 1984

The Ingersoll Prizes 1984

Comment; Berman on Finneran *(W. B. Yeats)*; Thompson on Schachtman, Matusow *(Decade of Shocks, The Unraveling of America)*; Tanner on Valenzuela *(The Lizard's Tail)*; Vasilash on Donoghue *(The Arts Without Mystery)*; Moser on Kimball *(The File)*; Sniegoski on Tuchman, Shirer *(The March of Folly, 20th Century Journey)*; Peters on Bruner *(In Search of Mind)*; Commendables; In Focus; Waste of Money; Screen; The American Proscenium; Journalism; Notables; Confluences; Liberal Culture.

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Subversion at the NEH?

In 1983, the Berlin Senat awarded my German partner and myself a "low-budget" grant to produce a short documentary film about the Great Jewish Cemetery of Berlin (that was founded in 1880 and has over 110,000 graves). Entitled *Ein Verlorenes Berlin,* this film suggests that the cemetery itself is the principal surviving relic of the "lost Berlin," for in its gravestones—in their designs and verbal-numerical details—are implicit images not only of Berlin Jewish life but Berlin in general in its greatest years (1860-1940). The visual track of the film consists of scenes from the cemetery; the soundtrack has the voices of ex-Berliners reminiscing about the cemetery and the world represented there. Twenty minutes long, this German film made its debut at the Berlin Film Festival last February and has since been shown at film festivals in Oberhausen and Bavaria (the *Grenzlandfilmtage*); it has been invited to the Israel Festival in June and will probably go elsewhere in Europe.

Since *Ein Verlorenes Berlin* ought to have an English version, not with subtitles but with a new soundtrack of ex-Berliners talking now in English, we thought of applying to the National Endowment for the Arts, whose Media Arts program had previously supported my work; but in truth, this film is not *Kunst,* as the Germans would say, but *Wissenschaft* or scholarship. It has a particular historical subject, a subject which is visually an especially resonant historical symbol. So, instead, we applied in 1983 to the National Endowment for the Humanities, which, however, refused to fund it.

Such refusal is, of course, the privilege of any discretionary agency, but what is curious is the explanation. To the folks at the NEH, the principal deficiency with our application was not the film's unconventional way of evoking history or its European subject but something else. The principal charge against us was that we lacked an advisory board of scholars (only "professors, with Ph.D's" would do, we were told) who should have submitted their "letters of commitment and resumés," to quote the opening sentence of the NEH's explanatory letter to me.

It seems that the NEH has a very particular concept of how a documentary film should be made. Once a filmmaker has an idea, he should gather around him a group of scholars who advise him from the beginning, who observe him closely through every step of the production, and who approve the final result; for this work, the academic advisors should be paid a consultant's wage. The model behind these requirements appears to be that of scholarly popularization. The NEH insists there is no other way.

It never occurred to us to proceed in this way. The first reason is that I know no one else more familiar with the subject and its significance. This is less an assertion of arrogance than an expression of my sense that no one known to me, professor or layman, perceived the symbolic importance of the cemetery and then bothered to investigate the place. Indeed, some prominent scholars of German-Jewish history have never been there at all. However, the NEH appears more impressed by credentials than knowledge, perhaps because the former is so much easier to measure. (Of course, once we finished a rough print, we had the good sense to show it to scholars, who identified errors we gladly corrected.) The second reason why we did not form such an advisory board is that the Berlin Senat did not require it (and indeed might have thought such consultancy wages an objectionable extravagance).

Indeed, if you live in West Berlin for any length of time, you begin to learn that there is a Western way to do things and an Eastern way. The principal difference is that the Western way favors imaginative freedom and individual authority; the Eastern way favors mental restrictions and the close hierarchical supervision of cultural activity. To do a cultural project in the East, you must get permission from far more authorities than are necessary here; and to get this permission, it helps to surround your project with the names of party hacks and other pets of the party government, whose affiliations are politically acceptable, all of whom, of course, should be paid off simply for associating their names with yours. That is the Eastern way of doing cultural things; there is no other way there. Now, looking at the National Endowment for the Humanities, especially in contrast to the Berlin Senat (that funded the film, after all), to which side of the Iron Curtain, as we say, does our Humanities Endowment belong?

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Meanwhile, as *Ein Verlorenes Berlin* is touring European festivals, which are often attended by the curators of other international festivals (New York, Filmex in Los Angeles, Sydney, etc.), we are often asked whether there will be an English version of our film. In reply, we explain that we would like not to translate the German film with either voice-over English speakers or subtitles—to cite two conventional methods—but to compose a new soundtrack wholly in English. Good idea, they reply. Here in America the directors of the Jewish Film Festival would like to show it with an English soundtrack; Educational Television, as well as the Margaret Mead Film Festival at the Museum of Natural History, have decided that they cannot make a decision for acceptance on the German version alone.

Have you applied to redo it in English? everyone asks. Yes, we reply. Don't you have government organizations in America that support such things? Of course we do. Have you applied to them? Yes, but we were not successful. Why not? The NEH complained that we did not have a board of academic advisors under whose close supervision we would work, who would be paid off for their involvement with us. To an American, this answer indicates only that academics have taken over the Humanities Endowment, writing self-employment, if not featherbedding, into its granting procedures. To a European, this NEH policy indicates something more, and more ominous—that this Federal cultural agency epitomizes the communist way of doing such things and, beyond that, indicates how closely America resembles the Soviet Union!

In short, the NEH has politicized our initially nonpolitical film, wholly on its own initiative. As *Ein Verlorenes Berlin* tours Europe, this story of its funding (or lack of it) will be making a decisive contribution to the current debate for the mind of Western Europe. On one side is the American position, which advises Western Europe to side with us, because we are different from the Russians and can protect you from communism only if you let us put our armaments on your lands. On the other side is the essentially anti-American position that says Western Europe should remain neutral and forbid American armaments, because the U.S. and U.S.S.R. fundamentally resemble each other. It appears that the National Endowment for the Humanities, notwithstanding its militant conservative rhetoric, provides ammunition for the latter position. We would agree that, in this context, the NEH was *objectively Com-Symp.*

At the Endowments last fall was circulated an "Administrative Directive" outlining a "Personnel Security Program" that requires the Endowments to employ "only those persons whose employment is found to be clearly consistent with national security interests" which it defines as "the protection and preservation of the military, economic, and productive strength of the United States, including the security of the government in domestic and foreign affairs, against espionage, sabotage, and subversion and any other illegal acts designated to weaken or destroy the United States." There is no question about it—by these criteria, in order to protect America and the American way, it is time to flush out the NEH.

—Richard Kostelanetz

Mr. Kostelanetz is at present completing a book on literary granting in America. He worked in Berlin initially as a guest of the DAAD Kunstlerprogramm.

Notables

Impenitence

The last words of Josephine Herbst, spoken on January 25, 1969, were: "Tell my friends I do not repent. That I love life unto eternity—love and life." Readers of the new biography of Herbst by Elinor Langer (*Josephine Herbst: The Story She Could Never Tell;* Atlantic/Little, Brown; Boston) will have a struggle trying to fit a meaning to the final utterance of this agitprop novelist, radical feminist, and inveterate fellow traveler.

"I love life"? Perhaps this refers to the deep love for life she evinced during the Stalinist purge trials: "If there is again a widespread growing class differentiation and oppression, it is far worse for me to look at than the killing of any dozen or even fifty men, old bolsheviks or what-not." To "life" that did not resemble the stilted ideological charade she offered in her "proletarian" fiction, Herbst showed a peculiar love. Alger Hiss, however, does seem to have benefited from Ms. Herbst's selective love of life. After all, Herbst (a one-time CPUSA member who left but never denounced the Party) protected Hiss by lying to the FBI about what she knew of the "Karl" intrigues. (Langer, a radical leftist herself, was disturbed to discover that her "sacrosanct version of the Hiss case" was demolished by the implications of Herbst's correspondence. Predictably, in a recent letter to the *New York Times,* Hiss reassures his supporters that Langer hasn't really uncovered anything incriminating.)

"Love and life"? "Love" might refer to Herbst's freewheeling sex life, her failed marriage, or her lesbianism—or perhaps just to sexual gratification in general. *"Life"* conjunctively linked to "love" is more difficult to construe. Possibly this is an ironic reference to Herbst's only baby, whom she loved to death before it could be born—a woman clearly ahead of her time. She also encouraged her sister to follow her lead and abort her child. (That abortion, unlike her own, dealt to the mother what it dealt to the child.)

"Tell my friends"? Like the hare in the Fable, Herbst called many people "friend" for a time, but none—including Herbst's lesbian lover—lasted. Most of her relationships ended in malice and mutual recrimination. *"I do not repent"?* This phrase, at least, needs no gloss. □

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Scandalizing Uncle Ez

E. Fuller Torrey: *The Roots of Treason: Ezra Pound and the Secret of St. Elizabeths;* McGraw-Hill; New York.

by Brian Murray

Without doubt, Ezra Pound was a remarkable poet. His best verse is beautifully cadenced, delicately chiseled. Herbert Read described him as "an alchemist who transmuted the debased counters of our language into pure poetic metal." Deferentially, T. S. Eliot called him *il miglior fabbro,* the better craftsman.

Pound was a brilliant critic, too. In scores of widely read reviews and essays published roughly between 1912 and 1922, he attacked verboseness in poetry and prose with the bluntness and zeal of a man trying, in Eliot's words, "to convey to a very deaf person that the house is on fire." With equal passion and influence, he called for public acceptance of the works of such diverse writers as Eliot, James Joyce, and Robert Frost: writers who, in Pound's famous phrase, "made it new" by steering clear of hackneyed conventions and sloppy thought. Pound, wrote Eliot, "cared deeply that his contemporaries and juniors should write well; he . . . cared less for personal achievement than for the life of letters and art."

And yet, throughout a career that spanned more than 50 years, Pound collected more detractors than admirers, more enemies than friends. For while he could be patient and gracious, he could also be supercilious and belligerent. Certainly by late 1945 the name Ezra Pound was virtually synonymous with the rhetoric of vituperation. By then, people who knew nothing about poetry knew that for many months in the early 40's Pound had delivered a regular series of radio speeches over Mussolini's Rome Radio, and that he hadn't wasted any air time chatting about the charms of the Tuscany hills and the Amalfi coast. Employing a weird, cloying L'il Abner dialect, he had bellowed against the Allied effort as a sinister cabal of mostly Jewish financiers operating in cahoots with both Winston Churchill and Franklin Delano Roosevelt. In July 1943 Pound was indicted by a District of Columbia Grand Jury that had ploughed through the transcripts of his harangues and found considerable evidence of "aid and comfort to the enemy." In April 1945 Pound was arrested in a Tyrolean

village by a pair of tommy-gun toting partisans and, in due course, flown to Washington to stand trial for treason. That trial never took place. Declared physically fit but "of unsound mind" by a group of court-appointed psychiatrists, Pound was shipped across town to the St. Elizabeths mental hospital where he remained, unconvicted, until his release in 1958.

Any person of goodwill who examines the now readily available texts of Pound's broadcasts can only describe them as morally disgusting. They are packed with stomach-turning anti-Semitic slurs. But one must also conclude that their propaganda value was virtually nil. Replete with arcane allusions and bizarre non sequiturs, they make the letters sent to the editor of the *New York Post* look as polished and as cogent as the missives Lord Chesterfield addressed to his wayward son. They could not have persuaded the average American serviceman of anything except that this yammering old coot who sometimes called himself "ole Ezry" deserved a one-way ticket to the funny farm.

Of course there was nothing funny about public mental asylums in the 1940's. For more than a year following his committal to St. Elizabeths, Pound was confined to a windowless cell in Howard Hall, a ward for the criminally insane. Here, where the smell of excrement mingled with sweat was nauseatingly rich, Pound often had to endure the prolonged howls of his straitjacketed floormates. He was allowed to receive visitors, but for no more than 15 minutes a day. When he was eventually moved upstairs to the more hospitable Chestnut Ward, Pound was granted two hours of daily social time, and in warm weather, the limited use of the hospital's elm-shaded grounds. But even in the Chestnut Ward he lived behind a thick steel door and among blaring radios and pathetic men in ratty bathrobes who wandered aimlessly about muttering to themselves, drooling.

Many of the academics and journalists who visited Pound at St. Elizabeths have recorded their impressions of his behavior while in confinement. Most note that he abhorred self pity, and was generally talkative and in surprisingly good spirits. But some, like the British writer John Wain, have described his hard-to-disguise fatigue, his tendency to drift irretrievably off. On the day Wain saw him, Pound "talked on and on in connected sentences and with perfect logic and persuasiveness; but if any one interrupted him with a question it simply threw the needle out of the

Dr. Murray is with the English department at Youngstown State University.

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groove, and he fell silent for a moment, passed his hand wearily over his eyes, and then went on talking, starting from a different point." In 1955 Pound wrote to his friend Archibald MacLeish:

> I can't work here. . . . The little and broken up time that I get (with no privacy and constant interruption and distraction) makes impossible that consecutive quality of feeling so important to me. . . . This daily laceration and frustration of a creative impulse, carried on even a little while, can and surely will, with me I'm afraid, end with complete artistic impotence.

In fact, it did. By all accounts, the Ezra Pound who finally left St. Elizabeths for a home with his daughter in the Italian Alps was a peculiarly sullen man, full of regret and doubt and depression.

In *The Roots of Treason,* psychiatrist E. Fuller Torrey says virtually nothing about Pound's horrific stint in Howard Hall, and relatively little about the discomforts of life in the Chestnut Ward. But then Dr. Torrey is a revisionist who has produced what his publishers call a "stunning new biography." Pound, Torrey argues, was nothing more than a megalomaniacal quisling who avoided trial and a certain conviction by faking mental instability. At St. Elizabeths he actually led a remarkably contented life. After all, Torrey argues, he had no financial worries and, thanks to his doting disciples, was kept well supplied with books, wines, and gourmet foods. Pound, adds Torrey, had a key ally in Dr. Winifred Overholser, the superintendent of St. Elizabeths and an aficionado of modern verse. According to Torrey, it was Overholser who engineered Pound's faked insanity plea, and who then consistently, flagrantly bent the hospital's rules in order to keep the poet happy.

The theory that Pound somehow faked his dementia has in fact been batted about in print for years. Though Dr. Torrey's support of it is based in part on previously unreleased government documents, he really brings nothing new—or persuasive—to the debate. His case that Overholser colluded with Pound is unprecedented, but strains belief. Basically, Torrey contends that Overholser risked public and professional censure to save Pound's widely hated hide because he humbly wanted to serve the immortal cause of Art. "As Pound had often seen himself as Odysseus," intones Torrey in his very best prose, "so Overholser had been his Aeolus, the keeper of the winds in Greek mythology, who saved Odysseus by giving him a favorable wind for his ship and hiding the unfavorable winds in a bag which could not be opened."

The Roots of Treason is from start to finish an irritatingly shallow book, full of malevolence and devoid of balance. Essentially, it attempts to put Pound in the worst possible light by playing up the most incriminating things he ever said along with the least complimentary things ever said about him. Too often then, Torrey yanks quotations out of context, or culls them from questionable sources. Indeed, like the typical freshman term paper writer, Torrey operates on the simple principle that if it's in print, it must be true—or at least true enough. He uses a 1945 Chicago newspaper article as the sole source for his bald assertion that Pound once referred to Hitler as a "saint" and a "martyr." He points to a vague, off-hand remark in Charles Olson's posthumously published diary to support his claim that

CONFLUENCES

Pound's Pupil

Late in 1933, Mary Barnard, a young college graduate from a small town in Washington, sent a batch of her poems to another poet originally from the rural Northwest, Ezra Pound. Thus began a literary correspondence that spanned two decades. During this time, Pound provided his protégée with encouragement, instruction, and introductions to other leading modernist poets, such as Marianne Moore and William Carlos Williams ("Billyum Bullyums" Pound called him). Miss Barnard never achieved the stature of this trio, but she did become an accomplished minor poet and a celebrated translator of Sappho. In *Assault on Mount Helicon* (University of California Press; Berkeley), she recounts her struggle in finding her place in the literary world and the assistance Pound gave her along the way.

Barnard offers no scholarly or critical assessment of Pound, Williams, or Moore, only a faithful record of her own experience with them. The reader must be content with glimpses of these large figures on a small but polished mirror. "My intention has been to give a picture of [Pound] as I knew him . . . . For the full portrait the reader must look elsewhere." Nevertheless, Barnard's personal experience is sufficient to make her skeptical about pejorative myths surrounding Pound ("I never encountered the crazed megalomaniac the journalists have depicted"). Her memoirs, moreover, make available for the first time a number of valuable comments and letters from Pound, Williams, and Moore. For example, when Barnard asked Williams to surrender his first letter from Pound to her for study since he didn't "love Ezra any more," he exclaimed: "But I *do* love Ezra! How could I *not* love Ezra?"

Even when treating her pre-Pound days, Barnard evokes the world of Washington logging towns with compelling detail. Her *orbiter dicta* on the fatuity of radicalized and feminized literary criticism are also worth reading for their refreshing sanity. In her assault upon Mount Helicon, Barnard never made the peaks. But she did ascend high enough to see above many of the clouds of modern confusion, to meet more intrepid mountaineers, and to write an engaging account of the climb. □

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Pound's wife Dorothy was "known for being excessively bigoted, especially anti-Semitic." And to back up his crude generalization that Pound "revered members of the aristocracy," Torrey calls on C. David Heymann, a man famous in academic and publishing circles for churning out big books full of monumental howlers. In fact, Torrey's ample and uncritical use of Heymann's dreadful 1976 biography of Pound is enough to prove that as a judge of scholarly material he is simply not to be trusted.

Because Dr. Torrey refuses to accept the diagnosis that Pound's increasing belligerence was in large part the result of an increasingly debilitating form of paranoia, he winds up repeatedly implying that ultimately Pound was just another nazi. Accordingly, he must step around the fact that in his more lucid moments Pound carefully defined himself as a champion of Social Credit economics, not a defender of dictators. He must downplay the denunciations of fascism—and of anti-Semitism—that assorted memoir writers have attributed to Pound, and which can also be found in Pound's published writings. He must also dismiss as irrelevant Pound's deep affection for such Jews as Jacob Epstein, John Cournos, and, most notably, Louis Zukofsky, who once said that "I have never once in Pound's presence felt the kind of embarrassment I always feel in the presence of a 'goy' who is anti-Semitic. Not once." That remark cannot be found in *The Roots of Treason.* Also missing is any real evidence that Torrey knows enough about modern literature to be tangling with one of modern literature's most difficult figures. His readings of Pound's *Cantos* are generally derivative and sometimes simply inept. His knowledge of the works and the careers of Pound's more notable contemporaries seems also to have been gleaned hurriedly from less-than-impeccable sources. As a result, he tells us that William Butler Yeats's lifelong interest in religion and myth and folklore amounted to a "monomania for the occult." He breezily reports that "the strongest bond" between Yeats and Pound was not their passion for poetry, but "their shared interest in mysticism and the occult." He says Wyndham Lewis was also "strongly anti-Semitic" but neglects to mention that in 1939 Lewis produced an entire book devoted to ridiculing anti-Semitism.

To be sure, Dr. Torrey's book is aimed principally at the "general reader"—at the far-from-picky B. Dalton browser who won't even pick up a book about a poet unless it promises to retail lots of juicy gossip and uncover a scandal or two. Therefore, its prominently displayed subtitle alludes tantalizingly to some "secret." Its cover photo shows Pound looking gruff and sinister beneath a broad-brimmed black hat. Its dust jacket flaps advertise Pound as "an active fascist and anti-Semite" who not only held strange "mystical and sexual beliefs," but who was part of that "moveable feast of literary Paris in the 1920's."

Most of the copies of *The Roots of Treason* will end up remaindered in the buck-a-book bins along with 1983 cat calendars and the autobiographies of aging rock stars. But it's no secret that a fair number will find their way onto the shelves of college libraries, there to be consulted—in naive good faith—by another generation of literature students seeking the "truth" about the notorious Uncle Ez. And *that* is a scandal. □

The Critical Temper

David Bromwich: *Hazlitt: The Mind of a Critic;* Oxford University Press; New York.

Ronald Bush: *T. S. Eliot: A Study in Character and Style;* Oxford University Press; New York.

by Ronald Berman

I stumbled on Hazlitt while I was still in college and have some old books of his that cost me 50 cents each—one that I won't part with is the little green volume of *The Spirit of the Age* in the old Oxford World Classics. Hazlitt also wrote *Lectures on the English Comic Writers* and *Characters of Shakespeare's Plays,* which are a great introduction both to them and to his mind. David Bromwich has used the 21 volume edition of *The Complete Works* which was edited exactly half a century ago. It suggests that if you are going to do Hazlitt, you will have to drop most of everything else.

William Hazlitt was born in 1778 and became, in his short and argumentative life, one of the best of the Romantic critics. Coleridge was more intelligent, but did not cover nearly as great an area. Like Coleridge and Wordsworth, Hazlitt was influenced by the French Revolution. He retained (qualified) admiration for that first of all modern events and, like Stendhal and Balzac, he worshiped Napoleon. He certainly knew what 1789 meant:

> About the time of the French Revolution, it was agreed that the world had hitherto been in its dotage or its infancy; and that Mr. Godwin, Condorcet, and others were to begin a new race of men—a new epoch in society. Every thing up to that period was to be set aside as puerile or barbarous .... The past was barren of interest—had neither thought nor object worthy to arrest our attention; and the future would be equally a senseless void,

Dr. Berman's most recent book is Culture & Politics *(University Press of America).*

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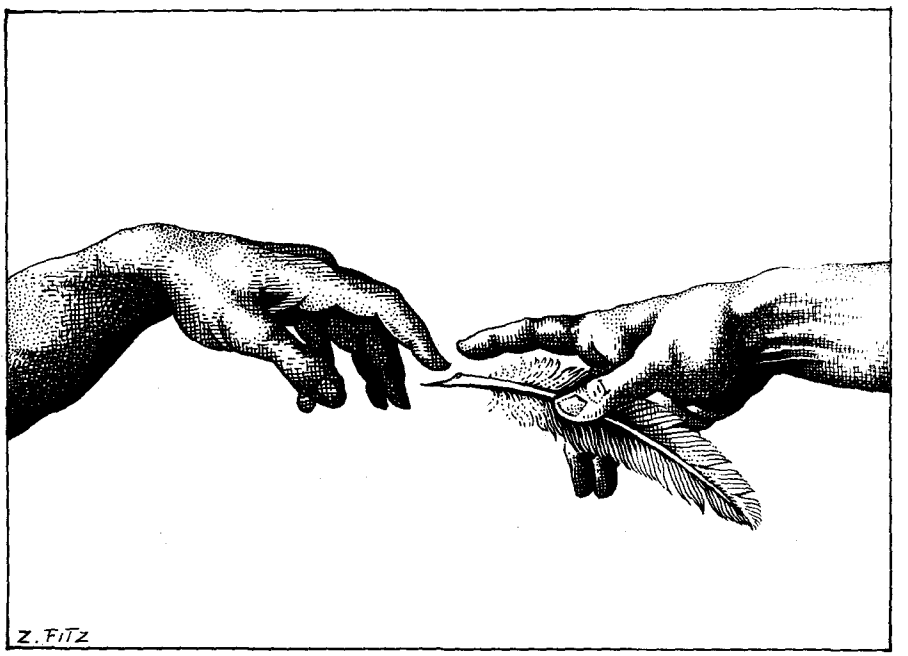
except as we projected ourselves and our theories into it.

Possibly the most remarkable thing about this passage is its ending: "There is nothing I hate more than I do this exclusive, upstart spirit." Hazlitt's own spirit was troubled by sex, by politics, and (in this he was one of the first moderns) by the idea of culture. But his mind was uniquely open, and it led him to thoughts about writing that have lasted from his time to ours.



There is no doubt that Hazlitt has receded from our consciousness. (Coleridge is the one Romantic essayist read on campus, and no one seems to read much of him.) But a sampling of his writing—copiously quoted by Bromwich—reminds us of what we have missed. The book is large, complex, and highly argued. It covers Hazlitt's relationship with Coleridge, Wordsworth, and other Romantics. It deals with Hazlitt's art criticism, his enduring argument with the philosophy and politics of Burke, his publication, his sex life or rather his sexual problems, and his theater and cultural criticism. The book does him justice, although it is sometimes too academic for the general reader. It certainly is inspired by love for its subject, and by contempt for his adversaries.

Not many realize that Hazlitt was responsible for our own interpretation of Shakespeare: he shared with Edmund Kean a new vision of the way that Shylock should be on stage and what in social life he should represent. It can be fairly said that Dickens's Fagin and Hazlitt's Shylock are the two great figures of their kind for the century. As Bromwich remarks, it is now impossible for us to think of Shylock as he was before Hazlitt went to work on the play. Before Hazlitt and Kean, Shylock was crude, comic, self-aggrandizing; a Punch and Judy character who danced around the stage like a dervish on hot coals. He had no dignity and deserved no sympathy. Hazlitt had the wit to see that Shylock corresponds to some deep feelings in the modern mind. His interpretation of Shylock, like Coleridge's interpretation of Hamlet, changed our minds about Shakespeare's plays and suggested that literary characters may be representations of social issues. What Hazlitt wrote about Shylock—"There is a strong, quick, and deep sense of justice mixed up with the gall and bitterness of his resentment"—may be said to stand equally for Hazlitt's sense of his own life and career, and for the condition of radical intellectuals between Napoleon and Victoria.

One can only hope that we will reacquaint ourselves with the man who challenged Burke with equal and opposing ideas and style: "If, instead of being young, beautiful, and free of manners, Marie Antoinette had been old, ugly, and chaste, all this mischief had been prevented." Hazlitt was a worthy adversary of Burke, although, like those "projectors" mentioned in *Reflections on the Revolution in France,* he certainly tried to politicize culture. In his essays on Byron and Canning he tends to treat the politician and the poet in the same way (to which does the line "he drivels, or he rages" best apply?) and to demand of both the right ideas and morality. Both poetry and politics he sees as public enterprises, a position which is both good and bad.

Eliot thought that Hazlitt was bad—in fact, that he was an ideological and stylistic calamity. The difference between the two could not be exaggerated: Ronald Bush's book on Eliot proceeds from that great line by Verlaine so taken to heart by Eliot: "Take eloquence, and wring its neck."

In a recent review of *T. S. Eliot: A Study in Character and Style* in the *New York Times* it was suggested that the book was inferior to Lyndall Gordon's *Eliot's Early Years.* I tend to agree with the *Times.* Gordon's book appeared in 1977, and gave us pretty much a new idea of Eliot. It provided accurate information about the life and demonstrated that there were personal reasons for the dreams, hallucinations, and breakdowns so often portrayed in the work. To a certain extent Bush continues this mode of criticism, and does more than acceptable work. But his book is narrowly devoted to a thesis—that Eliot was the prisoner of his New England conscience which made love,

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personal stability, and even writing very difficult—and it rides that thesis hard. It is relentless in reading the poetry, which it does line by line, in order to extract from the text proof of the theory. This is not what the New Criticism meant when it encouraged textual analysis: it meant discovering rather than proving. It is hard to accept everything Bush puts forth as proof of the author's ambivalence.

The good things about this book should certainly be stated. It goes into the unknown canon of Eliot's works. After reading this, one will know much more about things so far uncollected. It is very helpful when discussing "sources" and "influences" on Eliot, from Dante on to the French symbolists. But it may be best to sample its method in dealing with Eliot's most familiar work, *The Waste Land.*

The long and informative—and in some ways not satisfactory—chapter on this poem begins with a consideration of the woman who Eliot first married, and who was the "inspiration," perhaps, for the female horrors in each of its sections. Vivien Haigh-Wood was difficult: here is the assessment that Bush cites from Bertrand Russell: "a Dostoevsky type of cruelty . . . lives on a knife-edge, and will end as a criminal or a saint." Russell is mild when compared to Conrad Aiken, who describes her as "shivering, shuddering, a scarecrow of a woman with legs like jackstraws, sallow as to face" who spent one dinner with friends throwing food on the floor, then putting it back on her plate, and who seemed to throw off and inspire laser-rays of pure hatred. Bush argues that she is the great presence in Eliot's early poems, that it is her eyes that Prufrock sees, and her personality that the less pleasant lines of *The Waste Land* reflect. If Eliot was a combination, as Bush argues, of New England conscience and more or less normal sexual drives then Vivien was exactly the type to make the conscience more assured and the drives less satisfied.

The poem becomes more autobiographical than we might have thought, a kind of record of a miserable marriage, and of a state of personality never reconciled either to life, to society, or to itself.

This is good and useful to know, just as it is useful to know that "some of Eliot's *images trouvailles* were drawn from actual nightmares." But a reading of any poem ought not, I think, to rest upon what it has from the beginning looked for more or less exclusively. It becomes necessary to see the poem almost entirely as autobiography, to say that Eliot "projects himself into a rat with a human belly creeping softly and loathsomely through the vegetation." The rat is there, and the speaker—who may or who may not be Eliot—is there, but they are not, under the pressure of actual, historical feelings and conditions identical. The argument becomes that Eliot's poem is "self-dramatizing." But, as Lawrence reminded us about his own work and that of anyone else, trust the book, not the writer.

This particular book—*The Waste Land*—is about objective, which is to say external reality. It is reflective of texts, ideas, and cultural themes. These are interpreted by the speaker, but they are not the speaker himself. Granted that for many years the poem has been suffocated by mythology, approached only through the underbrush around *The Golden Bough,* it still seems to be more than self-actualization. It certainly seems to be about more than a series of dreams about a nervous breakdown as the following psychiatric analysis (cited with approval by Bush) would seem to imply:

> From a psychological point of view, Eliot's achievement lay in utilizing the content of his narcissistic regression for creative purposes. Having experienced a failure in response from need-satisfying and narcissistically cathected self-objects, he found himself empty, fragmented, and lacking in a sense of self-cohesion . . . . He made narcissistic fragmentation a basis for poetic form and alienation of self legitimate poetic content.

Maybe. But in a sense all literature is the result of this kind of thing—as Yeats put it, poetry is a result of our quarrel with ourselves—as opposed to history, which is a result of our quarrel with others.

In short, the reading in this book is a reading of narrow scope. It judges the verse insofar as language reveals "psychic energy" rather than denotation. But my own sense of the matter is that *The Waste Land,* although informed by personal experience—and perhaps even by actual personalities—is pretty much about what it states it is about: a view of culture keenly, intellectually, and philosophically objective. □

LIBERAL CULTURE

Entrepreneurial Metaphysics

While traditional religion languishes in America, innovative substitutes crop up on every hand. Offering the latest in spiritual services is one Ken McAvoy, a 41-year-old man dying with brain cancer who promises to deliver messages to the dead for $20 per missive. So far half-a-dozen people have paid for this service, advertised in a small Florida newspaper. McAvoy, who expects to be dead within a month, offers an "unconditional guarantee" on his service. He explains it this way:

I feel this is humanitarian. The messages are going to be delivered in a spiritual way. This is not a religious thing. I'm not getting into that.

What about singing telegrams on 90-day credit? □

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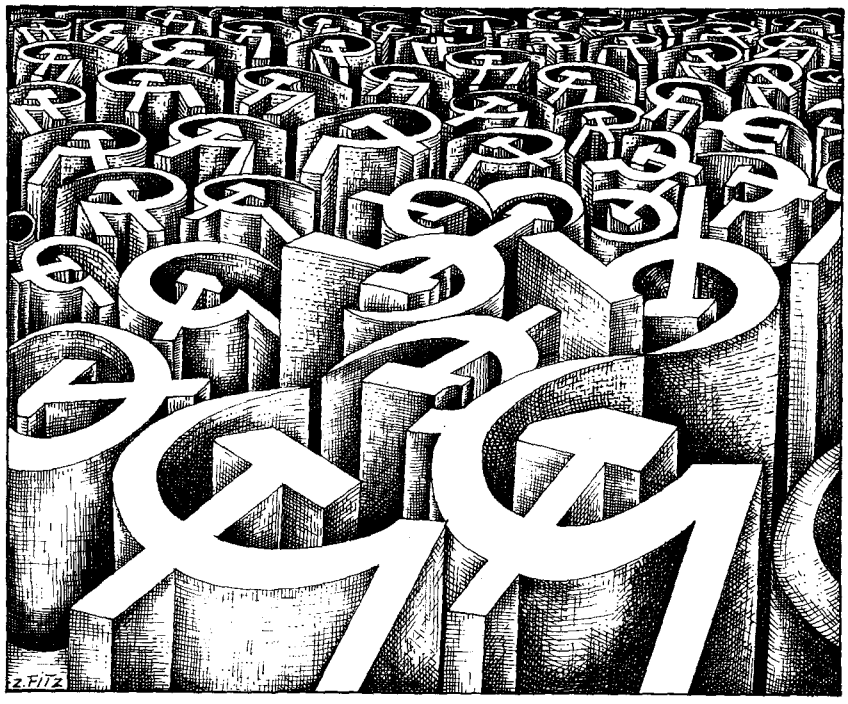
Fuzzy Focus & Clear Vision

Jonathan Steele: *Soviet Power: The Kremlin's Foreign Policy—Brezhnev to Andropov*; Simon & Schuster; New York.

***The Soviet Union Today: An Interpretive Guide*; Edited by James Cracraft; The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists/University of Chicago Press; Chicago.**

by Henry L. Mason III



Every now and again a book appears which, despite its pervasive deficiencies, is destined to become a minor classic simply because it epitomizes the delusions of an epoch. Such, for example, were the bogus Sir John Mandeville's *Travels,* a compendium of medieval credulity about men who walked on their heads or had eyes in their stomachs. Such, also, were the works of Beatrice and Sidney Webb, who proved to their own satisfaction—and to that of a generation of drooling fellow travelers—that Churchill and Roosevelt were dictators while Stalin was not, and that the U.S.S.R. was "the most inclusive and equalized democracy in the world." *Soviet Power* continues this lunatic tradition by doing for the decade of détente what the Webbs did for the age of Djugashvili; never did the birds of Aristophanes build a cloud-cuckoo-city half so wondrous as the U.S.S.R. as described by *Guardian* correspondent Jonathan Steele. For example, we find the Soviet leaders, undisputed masters of one-sixth of the earth's surface, whose guns, tanks, planes, and ships reflect the greatest military build-up in human history, presented by Steele as a group of humble political scholars whose "primary priority" is nothing more sinister than to gain Western "respect." Steele senses that the goal he attributes to the Bolsheviks may seem to Westerners to be "an odd desire," but that's simply because we fail to understand the heart-warming nobility of the Soviet leaders. Nor do we sufficiently grasp the U.S.S.R.'s "sense of being encircled"; after all, the Bolsheviks have to worry about such potentially overwhelming military opponents as Japan (Steele seems to have forgotten Nikita Khrushchev's remark, made a quarter-century ago, to the effect that the notion of "capitalist encirclement" was obsolescent because it was no longer clear "who encircles whom"). Moscow's "mood," Steele alleges, reflects "a deep Russian yearning for respect, understanding, and peace."

It is fortunate that the Bolsheviks are so modest in their ambitions and so statesmanlike in their behavior, for otherwise, according to Steele, they might overreact to the provocations of the pathological thugs who repeatedly come to power in the United States and who torpedoed détente because they "found the psychological and political burden of giving up nuclear superiority and accepting parity hard to bear." Because of American ignorance and malice, moreover, the long-suffering Bolsheviks have had to face unprovoked "economic warfare" and "fifty years of boycotts, pressure, isolation and contempt." In response, the most the U.S.S.R. can be taxed with is its attempt to "save" the Afghan "revolution" when the Marxist government of that country was overly hasty and "excessively sweeping" in instituting "reforms."

From the foregoing it can be seen that as a compiler and promoter of falsehoods Steele has few equals this side of Bulgaria, and there is little point in trying even to summarize them all; his description of the nuclear arms race is typical. According to Steele: (1) the United States started the nuclear arms race; (2) the U.S.S.R. "still feels, as it has always done, that it is behind the Americans"; (3) the Bolsheviks do not believe in nuclear blackmail ("There is no case of Moscow using nuclear pressure on a nonnuclear state"). Each of these assertions is incorrect.

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First, far from starting the nuclear arms race, the United States in fact attempted, through the Baruch Plan for United Nations control of nuclear energy, to restrain atomic rivalries, only to have its overtures contemptuously dismissed by Stalin. And it is difficult to conceive how Steele can assert that the Bolsheviks have always considered themselves "behind the Americans," since his contention was squarely rebutted at least 20 years ago in Marshall V. D. Sokolovsky's authoritative book, *Military Strategy* (a work that Steele cites only when it suits his rhetorical purposes). Here is the learned marshall modestly acknowledging Soviet inferiority in nuclear weaponry (2d Russian ed., Moscow, 1963):

> Considering the fact that hydrogen weaponry was developed in the Soviet Union earlier than in the U.S.A. and, most important, that the United States does not have available the ultra-powerful thermonuclear charges of tens of millions of tons which are in the possession of the U.S.S.R., we consider our superiority in nuclear weaponry over the Western bloc to be indisputable.

The Bolsheviks have stopped trumpeting their superiority, of course, simply because they have found that it inspires American efforts to catch up.

Steele's third proposition, that the Soviet Union has never threatened a nonnuclear power with nuclear weapons, is directly contradicted not just by 30 years of Soviet bluster (who can forget Khrushchev's ostentatious testing of monster nuclear warheads many times more destructive than anything in the American arsenal?), but also by the U.S.S.R.'s recent attempt to intimidate Belgium, Holland, West Germany, and Italy. Anyone looking for Soviet nuclear blackmail against nonnuclear countries, in fact, need go no further than *Kommunist* (December 1983).

> The Soviet leadership calls upon the leaders of . . . the Western European countries to once again *weigh all the consequences which threaten their own peoples* and all mankind as a result of the realization of plans to deploy new American rockets in Europe. (Emphasis added.)

Since it is obvious that the Soviet leadership is not calling attention to the "consequences" of an American missile dropping from its launching pad onto a Dutchman's foot, Steele's assertions become hard to explain as merely the result of honest ignorance.

Steele's brief excursions into Soviet *domestic* affairs are even more embarrassing; his foreign policy analysis coincides only with that of *Pravda*. Steele gushes, for example, about the ability of the Soviet peasant "to migrate easily into an urban job," despite the fact that the U.S.S.R.'s internal passport system and its requirement for urban residency permits make a mockery of "individual social mobility" (Steele's term). And his further allegation that "the educational system is egalitarian enough to allow young people to advance financially and socially to a level that was not open to their parents" is a bitter joke; in fact, the Soviet educational system is becoming not so much *egalitarian* as *hereditary*. If Steele had bothered to glance at the cover of *Krokodil* (July 1983), for example, he would have seen a cartoon depicting a six-member panel interviewing an applicant to an institution of higher education; the chairman, leaning forward, directs a question to the sloppily dressed candidate who is lounging in his seat with his hands in his pockets:

> "Young man, why exactly did you choose our institution?"
>
> To which the candidate replies:
>
> "Dad, don't ask silly questions."

The father's question is almost Socratic compared to Steele's book, while both

In the forthcoming issue of *Chronicles of Culture*

The Literature of Order

"In our time, the disciplines of humane letters and of scholarship are disputed in a Debatable Land by the partisans of order and the partisans of disorder. In this clash, often the enemies of the permanent things gain the advantage. Yet their victory is Pyrrhic: for in undoing order, they undo themselves. Preferring to reign in Hell rather than to serve in Heaven, they make a Waste Land, and are condemned to dwell therein."

—from "The Literature of Order"
by Russell Kirk

ALSO

Opinions & Views—Commendables—Waste of Money
In Focus—The American Proscenium
Journalism—Notables—Screen—Liberal Culture

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are topped by the nameless drudge at Simon & Schuster who describes *Soviet Power* as "brilliant" on the dustcover. Steele will be brilliant when, as Khrushchev used to say, shrimps learn to whistle.

The Soviet Union Today, by contrast, contains a valuable collection of articles on various aspects of the Soviet Union, from geography to culture, by 26 experts in their respective fields. Although the authors do not always agree with each other, the net effect of the book is to provide a superb foundation for further study of the U.S.S.R.

It is worth noting that one of the reasons for the book's value is its relatively heavy reliance on émigré authors. Normally, émigrés are ignored by Western Sovietologists as a result of professional jealousy (the émigrés possess firsthand experience which Western "experts" simply do not have), political pique (the émigrés are virtually unanimous in opposing the fashionable myth of Soviet "moderation," and are therefore summarily dismissed as "biased" or "embittered"), and fear (American institutions featuring émigrés too prominently may find themselves deprived by the Soviets of the opportunity to engage in "cultural exchanges" and other academic boondoggles). The result is a squandering of priceless intellectual resources that is little short of criminal; if the Western democracies had taken the same attitude toward refugees from Hitler, their scientific progress would have lagged fatally behind that of their enemies. To the credit of its publisher and its editor, *The Soviet Union Today* avoids this pitfall which results in a compendium of useful information.

American scientists, for instance, find Soviet technical journals hard to read ("It is clear . . . that an interesting result has been obtained—but not how or why; all the intermediate equations have been left out"). What is the explanation? Although "analysts" like Steele would no doubt babble repeatedly about compulsions for secrecy embedded in the Slavic soul, the true explanation is set forth in *The Soviet Union Today* by an émigré scientist:

> This happens owing to an acute shortage of paper in the Soviet Union, and leading scientific publications impose strict limits on the length of their articles. *The Journal of Experimental and Theoretical Physics,* for example, requires that submitted papers be no longer than 15 typed pages. It specifies that the account of the experiment must be very concise and that descriptions of intermediate calculations or other details may be omitted. Hence the difficulty in reading such articles.

The true explanation, incidentally, is far more significant for understanding the Soviet system than mystical appeals to Russian psychology. The U.S.S.R. has more extensive forests than any other country in the world; it is the socialist system that denies adequate paper to its leading scientific journals. In the words of an old Soviet joke:

> What would happen if the U.S.S.R. seized the Sahara desert?
>
> For ten years, nothing; then there would be a shortage of sand.

The two books, in short, exemplify the best and the worst in Western popular analysis of the Soviet Union. □

Making a Morass of Metaphysics

Fred Kaplan: *Thomas Carlyle;* Cornell University Press; Ithaca.

by Bryce J. Christensen

Most people know nothing about metaphysics and wish to know less. The case is not that they do not actually govern their lives in harmony with a set of metaphysical principles, for that is simply not an option. As Aldous Huxley perceived: "It is impossible to live without a metaphysic. The choice that is given is not between some kind of metaphysic and no metaphysic: it is always between good metaphysic and a bad metaphysic." A moment's reflection confirms the validity of Huxley's perception. Because meaning is always binary, consisting of corporeal fact and interpretative pattern, purposeful life always presupposes both the physical world of sensation and some metaworld of ideals.

However, though everyone has a philosophy, few think about it rigorously or philosophically. For centuries this has meant that millions of Westerners have accepted some form of Judeo-Christianity without subjecting it to much intellectual scrutiny. Doubtless many of these believers could justly be charged with mental laziness. But even the deepest of Jewish and Christian thinkers have concluded that the metaphysical premises of biblical faith are ultimately beyond the reach of the subtlest thought. Yahweh fashions an earth, then speaks to its inhabitants out of a burning bush, a whirlwind, or in a still small voice; the eternal Logos becomes flesh in Bethlehem—these are simply sacred *givens,* manifestations of salvific grace, not the demonstrable discoveries of any rational analysis. Such a metaphysics requires the most adept scholars, just as much as the most unlettered fishermen, to adopt an epistemological humility, an openness to the revelation the Lord promised when He said to the Psalmist: "Be still and know that I am God."

But the thinkers of the modern world have generally not been still, nor have they known God. Rationalists and skeptics of various schools have repudiated

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the *givens* of revelation and thus undermined Judeo-Christian logocentrism. As Huxley well understood, however, the destruction of one system of metaphysics does not leave a vacuum, for it always requires the acceptance of some other and quite possibly worse system. Nowhere is this more evident than in the life of Thomas Carlyle, a man appropriately labelled by one of his critics as a pivotal exponent of "the idea of the modern."

As a young man, Carlyle deeply sensed the need for some "system of metaphysics, not for talk, but for adoption and belief." But after a study of Gibbon, D'Alembert, Hume, and Diderot convinced him that he could no longer accept the Presbyterian faith he learned as a child and after a survey of philosophy left him still unsatisfied, he rejected all extant metaphysics as an "inexpressibly unproductive" realm of "Air-Castles . . . cunningly built of Words." The time had come, he announced, for creative writers to engage in a project of "Constructive Metaphysics" embodied in "a new Bible" of Literature. Accordingly, he identified "the Guild of Authors" as "the true Church" and prophesied that "peace will never be till they are recognized as such." During a lifetime in which he was widely hailed as a "prophet" and his works read as "scripture" by idealistic young people, Carlyle did receive some of the recognition as a quasi-priest that he sought. Indeed, Thomas Henry Huxley, grandfather of Aldous, wrote that from Carlyle he had learned that "a deep sense of religion was compatible with the entire absence of theology."

But what is religion without theology? Moreover, in what kind of "Church" can such a religion be practiced? Obviously, when *Theos*, i.e. God, no longer provides the metaphysical basis for religious meaning, a new focus of worship must be found. Carlyle's "Constructive Metaphysics" offered a "new (or totally unconceived) species of divineness" that did "not come from Judea, from Olympus, Asgard, Mount Mecca, but is in man himself." At first such a notion of internal human "divineness" may seem a comfortable one, easy to live with: no fear of displeasing a divine Judge; no tearful repentance for sin; no agonizing search for objectively true religious doctrine. But such a "divineness" turns out to be, as the course of Carlyle's own life and works demonstrates, more merciless and exacting than any creed given by the sternest external Lawgiver. For if there is no One outside of man to condemn him for his sins, neither is there any One to help him with his problems, not the least of which are finding some meaning for life and establishing some order for society.

Like most other writers of his time and since, Carlyle considered himself above all "religious controversies about faith, works, grace, [and] prevenient grace," but the internal logic of his Constructive Metaphysics forced him to preach one long uninterrupted sermon affirming the "divine" necessity of unrelenting human works to fill the metaphysical vacuum created by the rejection of divine grace. In an early letter to his brother he set himself against the Apostle Paul's teaching that salvation is "not of works lest we should boast" and expressed his hope "to go through so handsomely, without aid from any grinder or *boner* whatever, but purely by one's own resources." As Fred Kaplan shows in his meticulously researched biography, undoubtedly the standard for years to come, Carlyle did not "go through so handsomely"; his was a life of frantic anxiety, strife, bitterness, alienation, and despair. Unfortunately, in his repudiation of grace and his desire to live "purely by one's resources," he spoke for an emerging secular culture which is now likewise floundering in its efforts to survive on its own human resources.

In this sense, Carlyle's biography might be considered not as a new Bible but as a new *Pilgrim's Progress* in which a secularized pilgrim determinedly seeks not salvation in the Celestial City but rather a rewarding career as an influential creative writer in Vanity Fair. And whereas the tenets of Bunyan's faith permitted those who journeyed along the path previously "cast up by the

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patriarchs, prophets, Christ, and his apostles" to enjoy God's grace in the company of angels and of other believers, Carlyle's defiant gospel of Work doomed him to an unwanted solitude as he made his own uncharted path.

Emerson, Thoreau, and other American Transcendentalists fervently admired Carlyle, but unlike him they cheerfully accepted the fragmentation of society as a consequence of iconoclastic self-reliance. Literature might be the new Scripture, but in Thoreau's vision every man was to use such sacred texts within a private temple erected to "the god he worships after a style purely his own." Carlyle, however, wanted a new Church not of scattered sheep but of one united social fold. In the past, cohesive churches had been built by missionaries who could, either through reason or through spiritual manifestations, persuade converts that their doctrines and authority were of superhuman origin. Affording neither pentacostal wonders nor logical syllogisms, Carlyle's anthropocentric faith in literature forced him either to accept his American admirers' privatized understanding of religion or to look for some other mode of proselytizing.

In his early essays, Carlyle argued that creative writers who put their soul on display in "unconsciously autobiographic" works showed the world the true nature of the divine and therefore deserved reverential disciples. Accordingly, in his first major work, *Sartor Resartus,* he put his own contorted psyche on display in the guise of the eccentric German writer Diogenes Teufelsdröckh, whose Pen was a miraculous substitute for Aaron's Rod. The miracle Carlyle most hoped to effect through this brash act of self-disclosure was that of winning a society of converts. Most early Victorians, however, proved even less tractable to the egotistic bearer of this new ecclesiastical rod than Korah was to Moses. Carlyle therefore imitated his prophetic prototype by dropping his rebellious contemporaries into an abyss —the abyss of *The French Revolution.* In order to put his disobedient readers into this historical pit, though, Carlyle, unlike Moses, had to leap in first, leaving behind the ahistorical literature of self-exposure.

As he hoped, Carlyle did win a wide audience with his impassioned and vivid portrayal of the Revolution as an elemental and inevitable conflagration, consuming the rotten "Shams and Insupportabilities" of traditional religion. He devoutly hoped that the priesthood of Authors would be the ones to summon the Phoenix of a new communal faith forth from the ashes. Yet it was Napoleon, not any self-exhibiting creative writer, who finally emerged as the deity of the emergent new French society, while as hard as Carlyle tried to convert his own fame as an author into immediate religious and social authority in Britain, he met with only frustration and disappointment. Consequently, after struggling unsuccessfully in *On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and the Heroic in History* with the question of how to set up a social arrangement that gave authors contemporaneous socioreligious power, he finally bowed his knee to Cromwell, Napoleon, and Frederick the Great, a new trinity of gods who imposed their religious views by force.

That the verge in Carlyle's new Church was ultimately neither Aaron's Rod nor Teufelsdröckh's Pen but Frederick's Sword was inevitable given the original terms of Carlyle's Constructive Metaphysics. So long as the Mount of Olives and Sinai tower above the contingent human self, religious authority and social order may be predicated on something other than armed might. Once the mustard seed of Carlyle's new faith had cast these mountains out of his metaworld and into the sea of subjective human divineness, mankind was left stranded on Matthew Arnold's "darkling plain." Carlyle tried to lift himself and his society above this plain of combative disorder to some more elevated order by tugging ferociously at his literary bootstraps, but all he ended up with after all his tugging was a totalitarian jackboot. A career that began with a nontheological affirmation of the human "Spirit" of religion and a strenuous attack upon militarism and duplicity concluded with shrill acclaim for an agnostic Prussian who imposed his private version of "all the Law and all the Prophets" upon Catholic Silesia through deceit and bloody aggression. Inevitably, Carlyle's new credo, rooted in nothing but his own ego, collapsed into near-Nietzschean nihilism, with the righteousness of might an inescapable article of faith.

Hence, to call Carlyle's movement from the wildly idiosyncratic satire of *Sartor* to the harsh authoritarianism of *Frederick* a shift of "growing conservatism," as critics commonly do, is profoundly misleading. Though the conservative mind recognizes the need for authority in a humanely ordered society, it must also recognize the need for a credible philosophical justification for the decisions enforced by that authority. No judge, policeman, or military officer can conserve anything worthwhile in a world which lacks a stable, communally shared vision of another and better metaworld. But from its Alpha to its Omega Carlyle's "new Bible" constituted an effort to abrogate, not to conserve, the metaphysical principles in the old Bible upon which Western civilization is predicated. Far from "conservative," Carlyle's "Constructive Metaphysics" was yet another of the perilously innovative modern philosophies which have boarded up what Malachi called "the windows of heaven," even as they have unlocked the doors to government power to the darkest sons of earth. In the last moments of a life devoted to promulgating his own monstrous "religion without theology," Adolf Hitler was moved to tears of devotion as Goebbels read to him from Carlyle's *Frederick the Great,* a very popular work of scripture in nazi Germany. □

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Unclassical Tragedy

Bob Woodward: *Wired: The Short Times & Fast Life of John Belushi;* Simon and Schuster; New York.

by Todd G. Buccholz

Bob Woodward is an aggressive journalist who has helped reveal the secrets of Supreme Court Justices and a president. Like his previous efforts, *Wired* is a best-seller full of gossip and intrigue. Excerpts have appeared in the *Washington Post, New York Post,* and *Playboy.*

John Belushi found fame in 1975 as a member of "The Not Ready for Prime Time Players," the comedy troupe that appears on NBC-TV's *Saturday Night Live.* He became more famous to the public through a series of (with the exception of *Animal House)* forgettable films. He became more famous to Hollywood through a social life that was driven by drugs and ended by drugs in 1982.

While Belushi's life was not quite as short and fast as the title intimates, Woodward focuses on just a few essential aspects. *Wired* is not a biography that tries to trace emotional and psychological trends from childhood to the climax of a career. But where Woodward chooses to focus he examines with diligence. *Wired* contains so many facts about what Belushi did and where he did it, that if Belushi had lived he could not have delivered a more detailed account.

After a brief profile of Belushi's high school years in Wheaton, Illinois, where he was cocaptain of the football team and the school's best actor, *Wired* depicts his climb to national stardom. The mercurial actor distinguished himself in improvisation shows in Chicago, earning rave reviews from city newspapers. This was the early 1970's. His wild appearance with long, frizzy hair and slightly bulging belly fit both the times and his temperament. In narrating this period, Woodward points to the start of Belushi's drug use, also apropos for the early 1970's. This, and not Belushi's talent, emerges as the dominant motif.

Woodward, while maintaining the drug theme, does describe the years at *Saturday Night Live* and the making of several movies. Some intriguing points are raised. When Columbia Pictures was convinced that the movie *Neighbors* would be a disaster, producers adopted a hit and run strategy—releasing the film just a few days before Christmas, hoping to hit the big market and then let the poor picture die. Their strategy proved prudent, for the film was a loser.

Self-indulgence causes trouble in Hollywood. Movie budgets are often said to be inflated to cover drug purchases, and when a star cannot control his appetites, he can subject an organization to strange pressures. Woodward recounts one incident, when Belushi arrived at director Louis Malle's office demanding to see a script:

> John kept thrashing about . . . sweating as if there were a flame under him. Word was being spread . . . that John was there, and people from some other offices popped by to see him or hang around outside. . . . It was like Mardi Gras and all of a sudden a John Belushi float had entered the room.

Woodward is so confident of his research that he does not hesitate to tell the reader who in Hollywood takes or sells drugs. Jack Nicholson and Robert De Niro are on his list of takers—which might explain some recent flops.

Obviously, the real story is not just John Belushi but drugs, psychological instability, and Hollywood. Woodward only gets part of the story. Although Woodward is renowned for getting behind the scenes, he does not know what to do once he gets there. *Wired* has the facts but offers no more insights than a travelogue. And Woodward's style is no more elegant or interesting than Belushi's wife's, if her diaries are any guide.

What was Belushi like, when he was not a Mardi Gras float? Why did he become a Mardi Gras float? At times Woodward tells us that Belushi could be endearing, but this seems unlikely. Woodward gives the impression that there might have been more to Belushi. The only hints are that Belushi would cry every few years when a friend would tell him to cut down on cocaine. Once he stopped crying, however, the habit would resume. According to his wife, he was the same about his weight:

> John looked stuffed, his stomach like a giant, taut beach ball. Finally, she decided to broach the subject—wouldn't it be tough when he had to sing and dance hard for the filming? He agreed it would be and said he wanted to do something to lose weight. But that night they went for a big dinner.

More surprising, we do not even discover whether Belushi was a genuinely witty, clever, or funny person. Woodward must have spoken to hundreds of people who knew him. But no

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one seems to have told the author that his main character had a sense of humor. Often it is difficult to judge whether a comic actor is a good comedian with an amusing wit or just a talented actor. Lucille Ball, for example, continues to credit her writers for the humor in *I Love Lucy*. Lucy may have been a good actress, but not much of a comedienne. Woodward does not adduce enough data to judge Belushi's real talents. Belushi's disdain for writing might suggest he was more an actor than a truly funny man. At first one might attribute Woodward's shallowness here to his admitted ignorance of arts and entertainment. But these same questions should be raised in Washington, where Woodward is more at home. Even *The Brethren* questions whether Supreme Court justices write their own opinions.

For Woodward the most important question seems to be, Why didn't anybody stop Belushi's self-destruction? Responses from friends and acquaintances in Hollywood and New York are unconvincing: I thought he'd outgrow it; I didn't know how bad it was; I didn't know him well enough; etc. Although Woodward is too objective to weigh the merits of these excuses, he does find it sad that so many people knew of Belushi's problems but did not take firmer action. His agents felt torn between acquiescing to his demand for drug money and turning him down—which might put Belushi in even worse trouble. One might question, though, the sincerity of remarks from people who had knowledge of the drug habit. No one, it seems, was willing to admit that he or she happily supplied Belushi with drugs. But some people must have. Belushi was not a lone junkie lost in California. He was part of a fast Hollywood crowd, working in an industry where cocaine was often as vital to a movie set as a camera.

Some of the *apologiae* for inaction sound plainly silly or contrived. A few months before Belushi died, he offered *Saturday Night* producer Lorne Michaels cocaine. Michaels hesitated, Woodward writes:

> To refuse would be to appear to judge John, to stand above him. What good would that do? There had always been, always would be, a cultural gap between the two. Not just because Michaels had once been the boss, not just because John was now infinitely more famous and powerful; not just because Michaels was private about his own drug usage and John almost hysterically public about it. But John was reaching out, and the two had shared a lot.
>
> Michaels took a little cocaine.

Although Woodward talks a lot about drugs and about Hollywood, his approach is not sophisticated enough to ask why so many people in Hollywood use drugs and why so many people out of Hollywood do not care whether their heroes are performing under the influence of narcotics. Indeed, many of Belushi's funnier moments on *Saturday Night* were monologues about drugs during news report parodies. Richard Pryor's near fatal accident with drugs has provided him with many new jokes but few new thoughts about drug use.

A movie star or starlet might become an addict or alcoholic because of emotional or psychological disorders. Yet, there are some who see drugs as a recreational tool. To them, drugs are fun. How long they can contain their usage is another issue. We do not know why Belushi began using drugs, or why he continued, or why he could not stop or be stopped. Woodward seems to blame a stilted family life, in particular Belushi's father. But all that Woodward could find about Adam Belushi was that he worked holidays and was Albanian. Neither hard-working fathers nor Albanian fathers necessarily cause drug addiction, at least as far as it is reported in the medical literature.

The more fascinating question concerns our response to famous people who are drug addicts. Many people are more tolerant of celebrities taking drugs than they are of commoners using drugs. As Albert O. Hirschman points out in *The Passions and the Interests*, people used to believe that only royalty had the capacity to feel real passion. In literature their trials and experiences were metaphors for entire nations. Tragic heroes, according to Aristotle, had to be of noble rank. The common man could not face real tragedy. The point is that stars, many feel, are entitled to drug and alcohol use, because they have the capacity and the need to go beyond the natural, normal lives most of us lead. They are royalty. Like Henry VIII they have big appetites for food, sex, liquor, and adventure.

When the Judy Garlands, Mario Lanzas, and John Belushis of the world are destroying themselves, tearing their minds and bodies down, some think the stars are just living it up—as they would if only they were "great" men, if only they had the "lust for life."

I do not know whether Belushi would have been a drug addict if he had not made it to Hollywood, if he had taken over his father's restaurants instead. But I do know that no one near would have tolerated him or his habits. And he might not have tolerated himself either.

Maybe there cannot be classical tragedy among the middle and lower classes. Surely, though, the upper class can be just as pathetic as the rest of us. And we should not mistake their pathos for passion. □

In the Mail

***Out of My Depths: A Swimmer in the Universe* by Paul West; Anchor Press/Doubleday; New York.** Zen and the Art of Dog Paddling.

***Oxherding Tale* by Charles Johnson; Indiana University Press; Bloomington, IN.** Life, death, and semi-intellectual fertilizer.

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The following is the text of Anthony Powell's address at the 1984 Ingersoll Prizes Awards Banquet.

Literature and the Real Person

by Anthony Powell

The invitation to visit Chicago, the outline provided of the Foundation's aims, and the name of the Award, made me think at once of a poem by T. S. Eliot, in which he describes a British visitor to America.

The poem is called *Mr. Apollinax.* I use T. S. Eliot to introduce the subject about which I am going to speak because the Award is named after him, and this particular poem offers the same field of speculation as that which I shall investigate in the novel. I will say a word about the poem first, before getting on to novels.

The poem begins:

> When Mr. Apollinax visited the United States
> His laughter tinkled among the teacups

I shall not quote the whole of the poem, but some later lines are worth mentioning as establishing the characteristics of Mr. Apollinax, and the people he came among:

> He laughed like an irresponsible foetus.

The hostess, Mrs. Phlaccus, is also named with Professor and Mrs. Channing-Cheetah. The final lines state:

> Of dowager Mrs. Phlaccus, and Professor and Mrs. Cheetah
> I remember a slice of lemon and a bitten macaroon.

Now one sees at once that T. S. Eliot is writing about actual persons he has in mind. It is said—I don't know with how much truth—that in Mr. Apollinax himself the philosopher Bertrand Russell is intended, a thinker for whose views Eliot, for more than one reason, was likely to be out of sympathy.

In the light of the many vicissitudes of Bertrand Russell's life and opinions, the phrase "laughter of an irresponsible foetus" perhaps lends weight to the truth of this identification.

So far as I know Mrs. Phlaccus and the academic Cheetahs have not been pinpointed in this elegant, but undoubtedly barbed, poetic commentary.

Since the Foundation has flatteringly recognized my own work in this substantial manner, I would like to speak of the business of identifying "real persons" named in novels in the pseudonymous manner T. S. Eliot appears to have used in a poem.

This is a matter that has reached formidable proportions today, in that reviewers—let alone private persons—seem to think that no novelist is capable of inventing anything. Every character is recklessly identified as a "real person," every incident as something that happened to the authors themselves. In my own case I have more than once been congratulated on lifelike representations of persons I have literally never heard of.

Some sort of clarification therefore seems desirable in defining how things look from the producer's, rather than the consumer's end. Do novelists simply write down a list of all the people they know, shuffle the names together, put them in some sort of dramatic juxaposition, thereby ending up with a complete novel?

That is not, I think, quite how writing a novel works. Novelists are persons who happen to see life, and the behavior of human beings, in vivid interior images—though in very different ways—so that in a sense Proust has more in common with Harold Robbins than with persons who do not find images taking shape in the mind.

Naturally such images often have bearing on persons and events with which the writer is familiar, and there arises the possibility that a "real person" will be used in the novel. There are other occasions when the novelist writes about a type, rather than an individual held in mind, or simply invents. At the present day the interest in models seems, on the part of the reader, often to outrun interest in the novel itself.

Let us agree then that, even if much is invented, most novelists draw their material in some degree from "real life," even those who set their background in Ancient Egypt or Arthurian Britain not only revealing their own personal preoccupations in an imaginative fantasy, but, if only subconsciously, probably using individuals and experiences with which they are familiar in everyday life.

If a character in a novel bears no resemblance whatsoever to any human being we have ever met—nor could ever meet whatever the circumstances, including reincarnation—there is likely to be something wrong in the writing.

That principle is just as true of fantasy as of naturalistic narrative. The reason why books like *A Christmas Carol,* or *Alice in Wonderland,* are always rereadable is that Marley's Ghost, say, or The Red Queen, not only could be known to us, but often actually are persons we seem to encounter.

At the same time it must be emphasized that the images that present themselves to the mind of any novelist with more than amateur talent take an entirely different form from when the same writer is describing a person in Autobiography or Memoirs. In such works, if done properly—allowing naturally for courtesy, libel, and space available—nothing is added or omitted. The account of the individual is perfectly straightforward.

No doubt in novels minor figures are sometimes dealt in just that manner, absolutely as the author sees them, drawn exactly

Mr. Powell is the 1984 recipient of The Ingersoll Foundation's T. S. Eliot Award.

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from life without any novelistic trimmings. Such characters, however, can play little active part in the narrative. Once a "real person" has to do that, changes must be made.

The "real person" who sets going the idea of a major character in a novelist's mind always requires addition, modification, development, before he (or she) can acquire enough substance to exist as a convincing fictional figure.

These alterations come not so much from thought on the novelist's part as from a controlled—later perhaps to some extent developed—instinct as what gives a character life.

It must always be remembered by those who love to say "Such-and-such a character is So-and-So" that the moment the smallest change is made in that character to suit the novelist's convenience, all genuine dependence on the original model ceases. It is no longer that person.

This is the contrast made by the Novel to Memoirs and Autobiography. In a novel, to take a given person and fit him (or her) in with other characters, "real" or invented, would not be possible without alteration.

The way taken by the novelist in escaping from this predicament might be compared with the manner in which the Greeks made the pillars of their temples slightly convex, so that in perspective they should seem straight. Painters, too, have many artifices in which color or colors of one kind or another are used to give quite another color-impression to the eye of the observer.

Many well-known novelists have not made use of "real persons" in the manner which is now popularly supposed as general, especially where subsidiary characters are in question, but as we are here considering the use of "real people," let me give two very different illustrations of how this may be done.

Henry James's biographer, Leon Edel, whose views on the subject one would certainly respect, suggests that Merton Densher, the young and impecunious journalist in *The Wings of the Dove,* is to some extent modeled on James's young journalist friend, Moreton Fullerton, who was in fact rather successful at his profession.

You will recall that Merton Densher wants to marry Kate Croy, but has not enough money to do so. The two of them therefore toy with the design of Densher marrying the dying Milly Theale, from whom, as her husband, he would, on Milly's demise, inherit riches to make marriage with Kate possible.

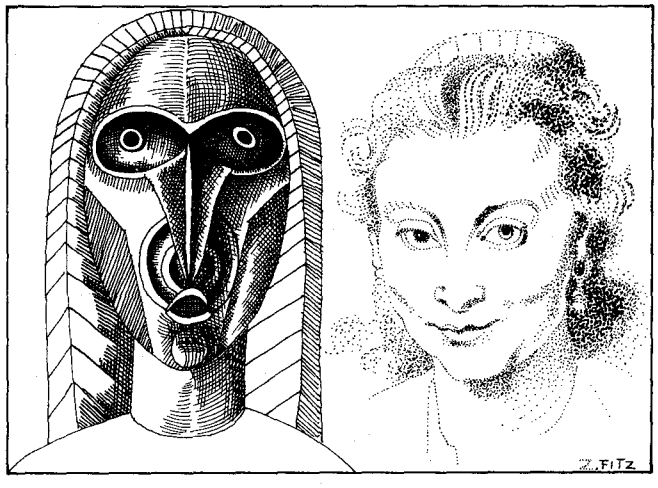
In the event, when Milly dies, Densher feels moral scruples. The reader is not told what happens finally, but the more cynical may suspect that in the end both Densher and Kate found it possible to compromise with conscience.

What then about the supposed model for Densher, James's young friend Moreton Fullerton? He is a figure who might perhaps not unreasonably be described as a shade sinister. Fullerton had a divorced wife, a blackmailing French mistress, a homosexual past. To say the least he was emotionally tough. On the other hand, there is not a scrap of evidence to suggest that he even planned to turn an honest penny by marrying an heiress on her deathbed.

In short, one wonders whether the decidedly dubious moral situation in *The Wings of the Dove* may have owed something to James pondering on the emotional toughness of Fullerton and his sexual problems, coming up at last with the theme of the novel, in which, for all we know, other characters had models in James's mind.

I take this as an example of the possibility of a model being used by a novelist, where the final result emerging is infinitely remote from anything that actually took place in "real life" to the person concerned.

In contrast with that method, let us glance for a moment at Ernest Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises.* In this novel not only is almost the whole cast identifiable among a group of American and British Paris expatriates in the 1920's, but, apart from the dovetailing of two visits to Spain, relevant action is also retained as closely as possible. All that the author does is to point up certain relationships, so that they are dramatized in a workmanlike manner.



I doubt if any novel of the same standing could be named in which so little deviation from "real life" takes place, while at the same time constructing an effective work of art.

In the case of *The Sun Also Rises* the persons involved, with a few exceptions, gratefully accepted this fictional picture of themselves. It could even be argued that the novel clarified for some of them their own *personae,* and influenced their subsequent behavior. This was in direct contrast with Moreton Fullerton, who asked James if another journalist, known to both of them, was intended. That may, of course, have been a deliberate evasion on Fullerton's part, as he was a devious man.

As already remarked, "real people" who merge successfully into fictional characters are rare. Much bad novel-writing can

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be laid at the door of the misconception that, because someone has an outstanding personality in "real life," he (or she) can be easily assimilated into a novel.

If anything, the reverse is true. Strongly "realized" persons are apt to move through a novel into which they are inserted simply as themselves, not on the fictional plane demanded by art. They are therefore extremely risky elements to use. I should like to give two examples from Dostoevski.

Let me say at once that, although one of these examples is in some degree to Dostoevski's disadvantage, I have an immense respect for him, much preferring Dostoevski to Tolstoy. He contends with Proust, in my view, as the greatest of novelists.

In Dostoevski's work, contrary to some critics, my order of choice is *The Devils* (sometimes called *The Possessed*), *The Idiot,* and *The Brothers Karamazov.* My examples come from the first of these.

Written just over a century ago, *The Devils* handles all the problems that beset us today in a manner that makes the reader feel that the book was written last week. I particularly recommend Dostoevski translations by David Magarshak, which bring out a point of which many people are still unaware, that Dostoevski is an immensely humorous writer. Again and again the reader laughs aloud.

The Devils begins with an account of Mr. Verkovensky, one of the great comic characters of European literature. Mr. Verkovensky is a university professor of some distinction, who

A Conversation With Anthony Powell

In his address, Anthony Powell explores some of the questions raised by an apparently autobiographical approach to fiction. We asked him if there were any problems connected with using a first person approach.

Anthony Powell: You have to appreciate that, after six years of war, I made up my mind that I was going to write a very long book. I came to the conclusion that if people write a book in about 10 or 12 volumes, there's bound to be somebody who really represents what they think and the way they look at life, and it seemed to me, after a good deal of thought, that if you wrote in the first person—strange as it may seem—it was less egotistical than writing in the third person and describing somebody all the time who is really yourself. Over and above that, there is the question of saying "I" and narrating a lot of things which I hadn't done. There are these two personae, your own point of view and the things that have happened to you, and the fictional one as well. You have to merge those together in a tolerable way. I think that is, roughly speaking, what is called art. That is what writing a novel means.

Chronicles: The author's personality is becoming increasingly prominent in a different sort of way. Writers are becoming more and more public men as lecturers, professors. They make television appearances. Does this present a problem for the novelist?

A.P.: There are two different temperaments, one of which finds it very agreeable to appear a great deal on television. I much dislike public appearances, but I think it is part of a writer's routine these days, up to a point, like being reviewed, to give interviews and to appear on television occasionally. I have no taste for talking, lecturing, and appearing on quiz shows. As far as I am concerned, I would very much not wish to have a television personality. It happens not to be at all in my line. I have no histrionic gifts.

Chronicles: In this connection, Philip Larkin has suggested that there is a danger in writers becoming not only public personalities but becoming state-subsidized personalities.

A.P.: With that I would certainly agree. I should have thought there is a great danger. What I think is that a writer ought to be able to look forward to something. He ought not to be left absolutely to starve in old age. But from what I have observed of people who are helped when they are young, it seems to me that it has often been a positive hindrance. I could mention writers who seem promising in the beginning . . . .

Chronicles: We have a particular problem in the U.S. of agencies which are passing enormous sums of money to scholars and writers of fiction and verse. It seems to be an influence on literary text and on the literary market as a result.

A.P.: Yes, I am sure that is true. All the stuff you sent me about The Ingersoll Foundation and semi-political pressures . . . all that does happen. I don't

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prides himself on his Liberalism having made him suspect to the Tsarist authorities. In point of fact the Tsarist authorities show not the smallest interest in Mr. Verkovensky, who has in any case retired from active academic life.

Mr. Verkovensky lives on the bounty of a rich widow, Mrs. Stavrogin, another marvelously comic character. He has done this for years. Mr. Verkovensky and Mrs. Stavrogin have perpetual emotional rows. One presumes that they were lovers long ago, but that is not precisely stated, and the reader is never quite sure that Mr. Verkovensky has not kept his position by never giving in on that point. The relationship is unfailingly farcical, at the end even rather touching.

Mr. Verkovensky is agreed to be modeled on the Russian historian Granowski. I do not know where Granowski's reputation has come to rest in Russia, but outside Russia it could be safely assumed that only those professionally concerned with Russian history would ever have read his works or even heard of him.

This does not in the least affect Mr. Verkovensky as a brilliant conception in Dostoevski's novel, any more than Falstaff is affected by Shakespeare originally calling him Oldcastle, and, when the Oldcastle family objected, changing the name to Sir John Falstaff, even though the historical Sir John Falstaff was a sober man of business and capable soldier.

Just as Mr. Verkovensky is modeled on Granowski, another character in *The Devils*, Karmazinov, is modeled on the great Russian writer Turgenev, Karmazinov also being a famous writer.

Unfortunately Dostoevski particularly disliked Turgenev for

think over here it happens quite as much. Although, no doubt, one can sense a similar tendency to that you refer to in your publications. Broadly speaking, you do get a lot of this rather leftish sort of view in criticism. It is made rather a joke if somebody takes another line.

Chronicles: In your own novels, you have clearly avoided politicizing but you haven't avoided political characters.

A.P.: No, one of my theories about politics generally is there are three sorts of people. To begin with, practically everybody, if you get down to it, holds certain fundamental views on politics. Some think they know about politics. Some people are very gifted in writing about them. I don't think it matters very much what side they are on. There are people who have got the hang of them. Then I think there are people who write a lot about them who haven't got the hang of them. They don't know what the whole bloody thing is about. I have certainly got political views but I don't regard myself as having any talents for putting them forward except implicitly, except by writing something from my own point of view. But I don't put somebody in to represent certain political views of my own. I merely put in various human beings who happen to hold political views.

Chronicles: Do you think in general that by inserting such characters either to be mouthpieces, or straw men, that this has been damaging to some segments of 20th-century fiction?

A.P.: That is rather a difficult question. I would have thought that back in the 30's the thing really had damaged fiction because criticism reached the stage when anybody who didn't write in a certain political way was very much relegated by reviewers to some place of exile. I'd certainly seen that happen in the 30's, but to what extent that happens now I find much more difficult to say. Of course, so far as it goes, having got one's name known as a novelist to some extent, I get reviews. If I were perhaps 25 years old now and writing the same sort of books, I don't know to what extent what you say might not be true.

Chronicles: On both sides of the Atlantic there has been a tendency to dictate subject matters as a kind of implicit . . .

A.P.: It certainly has. You mentioned Larkin. He obviously thinks very much what you have just been saying. There is a tendency to treat Larkin as a poet who holds these rather comic views. You know, we all like our poets to be eccentrics. He can't truly be as right-wing as all that. There is certainly an element of that, I should have thought.

Chronicles: In some American articles on Larkin, one of the signs of his eccentricity is that he considers Betjeman to be a serious poet.

A.P.: Geoffrey Grigson has just produced a book of recollections. Last week I had it to review in the *Daily Telegraph*. One of the things he said was this very thing that you mentioned: Was Betjeman to be taken seriously? I said that many people would agree that Betjeman may have overdone his clowning on television but as far as being serious I thought he was every bit as serious, if not more so, than Grigson. Grigson's Achilles' heel is that he can't see that because Betjeman made a lot of jokes, that didn't mean that he was not serious. It is one of the most appalling things to happen these days. If people do occasionally make a joke they are thought not to be serious. But I think Leavis is very responsible for that and a lot of left-wing criticism generally. In point of fact there is not a single major novelist who didn't have a very good sense of humor—from Petronius to Proust. □

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being rich, celebrated, and above all for having lent Dostoevski himself money from time to time.

Envy, hatred, and malice are never good elements for a novelist to allow into the creation of a character, but, over and above that, the interest that attaches to Turgenev is in being Turgenev. As Karmazinov that interest is lost. It may well be true that Turgenev was vain of his success. Many writers are. But Karmazinov never comes alive. He is merely the object of the author's loathing.

Karmazinov is aptly to be contrasted with Mr. Verkovensky, because Verkovensky too represented things that Dostoevski hated, but Dostoevski is always fair with Mr. Verkovensky. He laughs at him, but keeps his own prejudices in control, showing Mr. Verkovensky's perfectly genuine but futile Liberalism, his unreliability about money and sex, his thousand absolutely believable absurdities, all stemming from the highest motives.

It should be noted that Proust was shrewd enough to grasp a principle that Dostoevski missed in his projection of Turgenev, the fact that too much guying may spoil the reality of a character.

For example, Proust introduces Anatole France into his novel as Bergotte. Anatole France is admittedly not so considerable a writer as Turgenev, and Proust is describing his narrator's admiration for Bergotte, rather than attacking him. All the same the temptation must have been considerable to put in some of Anatole France's idiosyncrasies.

In many respects Anatole France was a figure very open to ridicule. An unfriendly picture of him, even a caricature, would have been easy enough for a novelist of Proust's calibre.

On the contrary Proust saw that, for his own purposes, the comic aspects of Anatole France ought to be soft-pedaled. His mistress's salon, for instance, has been described as like a railway station, in which Anatole France was the stationmaster. To mention that would have spoiled Bergotte as focus of the youthful literary ideals of the narrator.

Perhaps I should close by saying that, when anything like satire is in question in dealing with the characters of a novel, the novelist cannot do better than reflect long on those sage lines written by Lady Mary Wortley Montague. I have quoted them in my Memoirs. They bear quotation again:

> Satire should, like a polished razor keen,
> Wound with a touch that's scarcely felt or seen:
> Thine is an oyster knife, that hacks and hews:
> The rage, but not the talent to abuse;
> And is to hate, what love is in the stews.

□

Notables

Fugue of Myself

It would be difficult to imagine two writers more different than Walt Whitman and Franz Kafka. Certainly no one familiar with Kafka's brooding anguish and grotesque symbolism will find many similarities between his work and the exuberant chants of Whitman's "New Bible," *Leaves of Grass*. Kafka was tortured by self-doubt, troubled by evil, dubious about modern society, while Whitman cheerfully worshipped his own body, embraced evil as willingly as good, and hailed the United States as a democratic Utopia. Nonetheless, readers of Ernst Pawel's recent biography of Kafka (*The Nightmare of Reason: A Life of Franz Kafka*; Farrar, Straus & Giroux; New York) will discover that Kafka—as much as Whitman—regarded creative literature as a replacement for Scripture. Kafka, observes Pawel, was among those writers who "reflect the spirit of an age in which literature had taken the place of faith, ritual, and tradition and itself become a form of religion." Writing, Kafka said, was "a form of prayer."

But when poets and novelists replace prophets and apostles, what kind of religion results? In the case of Whitman and Kafka, the metaphysical hole left by the displacement of God is filled by the artist himself. For his part, Whitman was only too happy to equate himself with Jesus, Jehovah, Zeus, and Osiris. Kafka, a far more honest, probing, and humble artist, revealed with greater insight the murky underside of this new creed. After rejecting the God of his Jewish forefathers, Kafka found the world dark, the search for meaning desperate, society faceless, and man more an insect than God's child. When a friend complained that his art was distressing, Kafka responded that "our times in general, and my own time in particular, have been and continue to be distressing." Perceiving no cosmic order and detesting Eastern European society and its fits of anti-Semitism, Kafka never shared a normal life with a wife, family, and friends. He lived, as Pawel puts it, in "his desert of solitude." Whitman swallowed society and nature whole and disgorged them again in ceaseless anaphora, but Kafka, like his Hunger Artist, fasted rather than feasted as he embarked upon "his journeys into the night of self and the world."

Though Pawel is a careful biographer and a lucid stylist, he is too much of a modernist to put Kafka's achievement into proper perspective. His jibes at Orthodox Judaism are gratuitous, and his constant harping on the male chauvinism in Kafka's world grows tiresome. Pawel praises Kafka for giving "shape to the anguish of being human," and, true enough, in the "New Bible" of literature, the Lamentations by Kafka are more compelling than the Psalms of Whitman. But a far older faith teaches us that "being human" holds promises more substantial than Whitmanian boast and more joyous than Kafkaesque misery. □

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Truth Dwells in the Imaginary

by Eugene Ionesco

The United States is a great country, as everyone knows. This is why America has many friends, among whom one must also take account of its less amiable, jealous friends. One must not forget that America saved France in 1918 with the disembarkation for the second battle of the Marne and saved Europe from the nazis in the 1940's. However, it could not save Europe from the Soviets, who are still increasingly dangerous, which many Americans still do not know.

After France's liberation, many Frenchmen and Europeans who had been saved from the nazis and concentration camps were won over to a sort of Americanophobia which is rather complex and difficult to define. There were, therefore, a considerable number of anti-Americans. Among these there were, obviously, some former pro-Hitlerites.

But the anti-American passion after the war was so great and in part, irrational, that the words "U.S. go home" were posted on walls as well as on demonstrators' signs. At first taken aback, Americans imagined that they had committed dreadful war crimes between 1942 and 1944, completely forgetting that without them nazism would *not* have been destroyed, and France as well as the rest of Western Europe *would* have been destroyed.

Curiously enough, in spite of the political mistakes that the Americans had really made in abandoning Eastern Europe, the Eastern countries did not generate anti-American hatred. On the contrary, even after Yalta, when the East Europeans, abandoned by Roosevelt, Churchill, and Stalin, were living in the worst existential conditions and under the worst tyrannies—by decree of this unfortunate pact—these peasants continued to have only love and friendship for the United States. For a long time they thought America would save them from totalitarian takeover. Alas, the Americans forgot these people involuntarily, or rather voluntarily. No liberating American army landed on Romanian beaches, nor invaded Hungary, Poland, Czechoslovakia, and other subjugated nations.

It is not for this reason that some "intellectual" Americans became absurdly anti-American—feeling guilty about something indefinable, but feeling guilty and criminal simply because they were being accused instead of thanked as they had expected. Anti-Americanism took a dangerous form. The most closed of military secrets were opened to spies by people who were supposed to have the duty and the conscience to keep them secret. At international meetings such as those of UNESCO, American delegates often took sides against the United States. Irrational guilt was at play, with force and efficacy, among important American representatives abroad.

Many times I've tried to explain to Americans what they've done for Europe. It was impossible to make

This is the text of an address delivered at Brown University, September 4, 1984. The translation was supplied by Brown University and is used with their permission.

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myself understood. Thus I am one of the rare European intellectuals who has never been anti-American.

From time to time, singers like Joan Baez, in Paris and in other cities, sing songs in luxurious hotels about the misfortunes of the slaves of today's Vietnam, and people massacred by the Vietcong are remembered. In one of the most sumptuous rooms of the Meurisse Hotel in Paris, Joan Baez denounces the new crimes, just as some years ago, in the same place, she denounced American soldiers.

Perhaps there is another, more subtle form of colonialism with which the United States has not been reproached. West European countries have equally contributed to this cultural and spiritual colonialism in the name of a certain Marxism and technology. I'm speaking about Far Eastern countries that, having become Marxist, have broken their attachments to thousand-year-old spiritual traditions. In this way, the new cultural colonialism is contrary to that of the past, in which the Asian countries' cultures were left intact. For example, Indochina under French colonization was allowed a spiritual liberty because the colonizers did not tamper with their culture. Nowadays, China, Korea, and other countries, having forgotten their traditions so as to adopt technology and an excessive politicization, are no longer free, in spite of their political independence. National independence is not always synonymous with liberty, either physical nor moral. Poland, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Hungary, and Romania are subjected to a single way of thought, to a cultural tyranny which, far from being simply political, is above all an ideological tyranny.

But the most important and serious thing had to do with politics and diplomacy: the Allies, with the Americans at the forefront, ceded half of Europe to Russia at Yalta. This is the principal reproach to the United States. However, the United States is, in spite of its faults but thanks to its values, the last fortress of the free world; it *is* a free world, a free world that its enemies are trying to encircle and that they are trying, or preparing to try, to destroy.

American state-of-the-art technology has elevated humanity above itself. Of course, its conquests in outer space are grandiose, as well as those in medicine, biology, and physics. These conquests and these discoveries from which all humanity profits "super-humanize" humanity, if I may use that term. Is there in this a lack of spirituality or religion? Certainly not, since religion is not absent from it: we remember that on their first lunar flight the American astronauts read the biblical chapter of Genesis in outer space.

That must not make us forget, however, that modern technology possesses our whole planet to such a degree that ancient philosophers are forgotten. The young Chinese of Taiwan do not know Buddha, nor Confucius, nor the Tao, nor the superb, ancient Chinese literature. I've spoken to these young Chinese and I was astonished by their ignorance. I had gone over there in the hope of getting to know the true culture; I had to explain to the Chinese, despite my own scanty knowledge, what their great past culture was, who their wise men and philosophers were, and that these men were much greater than the great mathematicians and the great philosophers of today—greater than the Marxist experts and the great modern thinkers of Europe and America.

There was a time when every American saw in American society the perfect model for any society and any life. Then there arose, especially among artists and intellectuals, a contempt for America: a contempt of Americans for America. I can cite two examples: 1) An American journalist came to interview me in Paris about his country. He wanted to know the French intellectuals' point of view. When he realized that I wasn't anti-American, he got up, threw away his pencil, and tore up his notes. He hadn't had a negative response and that displeased him since the others that he'd interviewed had subscribed to his negative view. 2) Some time ago, Arthur Miller had written a scenario telling the story of the liberation of a women's prison camp in Germany. According to the truth and to the testimony of a former internee, either the Americans or the English had liberated the camp. The English director of this film showed the Soviets liberating the camp, which is entirely false. Arthur Miller did not protest. That is what disinformation is.

In any case, I don't care for this realistic writer, because we know that reality is not realistic and that realism is always tendentious. The documentary writer who is a prisoner of his ideology cheats. He falsifies "reality" in favor of his ideology so as to impose this ideology. In France they say that if the real facts don't conform to the ideology it is the fault of reality and not of the ideology. This explains the idolatry of communism or Marxism, of which Americans were the victims and many others still are. No, realism is not reality; realism is an aesthetic convention like any other. What is real is one thing for the man in the street, something else for astronomers and astronauts, something else again for biologists and physicists.

If you ask a physicist what reality is, he will be more perplexed than I am to define it. He will tell you that he doesn't know what reality is, unless it's energy or a movement. But energy coming from where and going where? Unlike the realist, the politician, the ideologue, or the authentic witness—so-called authentic—the poet doesn't invent and doesn't lie; he imagines. Truth dwells in the imaginary. We have known this since Freud and Jung, but we have not known it well enough. It is in the imagination that we find the permanent passion and anguish that is at the base of humanism. That is why dreams are true; they explain profound realities that have emerged from our extraconsciousness and are identical in all humans in all times. That is why Sophocles, Shakespeare, Novalis, and Rimbaud are understood. Progress in technology and the sciences does not

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necessarily mean equivalent progress in the arts. That Arthur Miller was born centuries after Shakespeare and Homer does not mean that he is superior, nor that he has progressed further in relation to these great artistic geniuses.

To cite another example of ignorance of what is going on in the world or the strength of our enemies' propaganda, I bring to your attention the following event: A few years ago when Castro, Cuba's dictator, let a large number of his people leave the country, an even greater number of Cubans wanted to leave. Certainly there were criminals freed from prisons who sought refuge in America, but there were also many honest citizens. A graduate student preparing her Ph.D. and I were discussing this once, and she said to me: "But only the rich people left!" Alas, she didn't know that the socialist revolution had taken place 25 years before and that there were no more rich people or capitalists in Cuba, except for the privileged few of the regime.

It is well known that America has had great writers that the public has unfortunately not always understood: Henry Miller, John Dos Passos, Steinbeck, and especially the great Faulkner, who, with Joyce, Proust, and Kafka, is the creator of great modern literature. More recently, we have the work of such authors as Capote, Saul Bellow, Singer, and others. In the plastic arts I can cite Calder, Pollock, and others. Today America has great men of the theater, of whom I will mention the greatest: Bob Wilson, much less known in America than in France. America has produced great cinematic artists like Humphrey Bogart and the formidable Marx Brothers, and others, many others who have recently died; and there are still others today. But there are scarcely any more new authors, because once more, the interest of young Americans is directed toward technology. Young people, young Americans who are listening to me, we must return to art and to literature. It is literature and not politics, literature and art alone that are capable of rehumanizing the world—and especially the theater, where we see ourselves live again in our love or our antagonisms.

Politics separates mankind because, of course, it is made up of partisans. Art reunites men and makes them brothers in anguish and in fundamental problems, brothers in metaphysics. The politics that today has primacy over the arts and even over science we saw in Russia several years ago, in Lysenko's case, where biology had to conform to ideology: that politics no longer wishes to organize societies in which men would have the possibility of developing their personalities; politics is now only the desire to dominate.

For that instinct toward domination, my friends, substitute contemplation. It is in art and in literature that contemplation can speak to us. A person who does not love literature or who is not acquainted with it, is, if not a dehumanized being, an incomplete being.

I am immensely sorry about this extremely harmful fact. I deplore equally, with all my heart, the fact that people no longer know French, that it is less studied. French literature is so rich, yet they say no one studies French anymore because France does not have the same industrial power as America, and because French is not useful in technology. Nevertheless, in the 18th century England had industrial primacy, which in no way prevented French from dominating as the universal language.

Not knowing the French language, its literature and theater, is a real catastrophe, a deficiency for all of us, something you are missing without realizing it perhaps. The masterpieces of French art and literature must not remain unknown; they must be studied, and the French language could be the meeting place of all cultivated spirits, as Latin used to be. In reality, French *is* culture; it can be the vehicle of a regenerated modern humanism. It could be a universal language.

In closing, I would therefore counsel you to give a bit less importance to politics and business (alas, we cannot do without businessmen, who are at the same time disagreeable and—again, alas—indispensable). But direct your interests towards art and literature; enrich yourselves intellectually. I propose that you think about this and think about it more often than usual. Act, playact. In the theater one plays man's fate, because art is a game—not a diversion but a tragic game, a game of knowledge, a ritual and spiritual game.

I am betting on the artistic disciplines and on literature. Malraux said that the 21st century will be religious or will not be at all. Make it be religious. Art is the human activity that is closest to the spiritual. □

In the Mail

***The Yellow Rainmakers: Are Chemical Weapons Being Used in S.E. Asia?* by Grant Evans; Schocken Books; New York.** "Allegations about biochemical warfare play on volatile emotions and can quickly lead to irrational political rhetoric. In this respect the U.S. has been the worst offender." So much for Mr. Evans.

***Brothers* by Bernice Rubens; Delacorte Press; New York.** A "recreation of the last one hundred and fifty years of European Jewish history through six generations of one Russian family." Can a miniseries be far behind?

***Korean Studies in America: Options for the Future* edited by Ronald A. Morse; University Press of America/The Wilson Center; Washington, DC.** Shows that Korean studies in the U.S. are on the upswing. Now, if only U.S. studies could get moving . . .

***Room 40: British Naval Intelligence, 1914-1918* by Patrick Beesly; Harcourt Brace Jovanovich; San Diego.** Break out the brandy, slide into some slippers, clip the end of a cigar, and—what ho!—have a jolly good read about some crack (and cracked) old-time cryptographers.

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COMMENDABLES

Old Answers to Old Questions

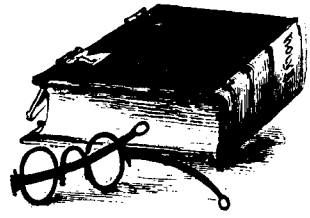
James C. Carper and Thomas C. Hunt: *Religious Schooling in America;* Religious Education Press; Birmingham, AL.

by Phyllis Zagano

After a decade or two of introspective breast-beating, educators are turning from an examination of what is wrong with public schooling to what is right with private schooling. This latest entry to the field examines religious education in the United States. Nearly 5.1 million students attend some sort of private school (K-12), eschewing for whatever reason the "free" government education which stands alongside, often with superior equipment and ancillary amenities, teachers' aides and gymnasia. Between 80% and 85% of these private school students, according to the authors, attend schools operated by religious denominations.

The overwhelming majority of denominational schools are operated by Roman Catholic parishes and religious orders, and in this volume's lead essay, "Catholic Schools: The Nation's Largest Alternative School System," Thomas Hunt and Norlene Kunkel examine the development of Catholic elementary and secondary education. Later essays trace the histories of smaller denominational systems, the Lutheran, by Jon Diefenthaler; Calvinist, by Donald Oppewal and Peper P. DeBoer; Seventh-Day Adventist, by George R. Knight; Christian (evangelical) Day Schools, by James C. Carper; and Jewish, by Eduardo Rauch.

The individually excellent historical essays are not well connected to the second half of this essay collection, which discusses three major contemporary concerns of private education: successes and failures of public schools, tuition tax credits, and state regulation of private schools. The first of this triad, an essay by Charles R. Kniker, accurately reflects the fact that private schools have taken over the



common goals of public schools by default. While the common school (later public school) of Horace Mann aimed at instilling five "citizenship objectives" in its students, "patriotism, knowledge of American history, awareness of the political process and voter responsibilities (civics), ability to communicate and ability to discern (critical thinking)," public schools have gradually abandoned this responsibility. Instead, assisted by the work of Lawrence Kohlberg and others, values clarification in each of these areas is being taught without reference to any general religious principles. The process itself has become more important than the norms against which judgments are made.

The contributors to this volume, primarily educators and professors, have hit upon the old answer to the old problem, and their entry into the discussion will undoubtedly strengthen the case for private education in the future. □

Dr. Zagano is a member of the editorial board of Catholicism in Crisis.

Putting Down Uncle Pat

Michael Schwartz: *The Persistent Prejudice: Anti-Catholicism in the U.S.;* Our Sunday Visitor Press; Huntington, IN.

by Arthur E. Hippler

Anti-Catholicism is so pervasive in America that it is taken for granted as somehow normal. Schwartz traces hostility to Catholicism from its Reformation roots in England, where it was identified with "foreigners" and political conspiracy. Transplanted to the New World, Anti-Catholicism played an important part in the French-Indian, Mexican, and Spanish-American Wars. During the early 19th century, the Irish migrations made the Catholic issue even more explosive than the crisis over slavery. It was the core (along with anti-Semitism) of restrictions on migration in the early 20th century and even played a major role in the leftist support of the anti-Franco forces in the Spanish Civil War. It is, moreover, not a phenomenon of the past. Pro-abortion forces, supporters of "peoples' democracies," those who oppose all American intelligence activities as McCarthyism, and opponents of support for sectarian schools all seem to share a deep, open, and avowed anti-Catholicism.

Schwartz spells out some of the myths which support this bias: Catholics are backward and stupid (though Catholics, next to Jews, have the highest achievement rates in the U.S.); Catholics are bigoted and anti-Semitic, e.g., Hochhuth's *The Deputy* in which Pope Paul XII is accused of supporting nazi extermination policies (in reality, Catholic teaching is against bigotry and Pius XII saved some 750,000 Jews); Catholics are bad citizens who owe their first loyalty to Rome (yet Catholics have died in disproportionately high numbers in U.S. wars against Catholic Spain, Mexico, and Italy). Other myths are obviously pathological projections, such as the "priest-nun orgy" myth—which is often put forward by the same people who accuse the Church of being anti-sex ("the sour celibate myth").

Finally, Schwartz compares the "demands" which the prejudiced make upon Jews, Catholics, and blacks. Since mythological fears of Jews are based on their assumed cleverness, cupidity, and power to control, and since Jews cannot undo their Jewishness, the preferred anti-Semitic solution is extermination. Blacks, on the other hand, despised for stupidity and animalism, are nonetheless feared as sexually insatiable; their very athletic achievements often adduced as evidence of animality. What's demanded of them is that they remain *untermensch,* vaguely dangerous but controllable, as a confirmation of the tenuously held superiority feelings of their detractors.

"Demands" on Catholics are of a different stripe. It is the Catholic Church which is feared as a repository of dark papal maneuverings and potentially inquisitorial suppression. Individual Catholics are simply despised for their superstitious adherence to idolatry and assumed anti-intellectualism. All that is demanded of them is that they renounce their Faith. As neutralized, harmless "Uncle Pats," they then become acceptable members of the colorless majority. (Especial-

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ly so if they actively denounce Romanism.)

But what has been the outcome of all this for American culture? The strange *mésalliance* of "liberal" relativists and Protestant fundamentalists in their attack on their only shared enemy, the Catholic Church, has resulted in the predictable rise of secular humanism, which in the end is destructive to all Christianity. The suppression of Christian schools and the erection of phony "constitutional barriers" act to eradicate any but the vaguest religious impulses, and enshrine a virulent irreligion as the absolute standard of public good. □

Required Reading

Philip Larkin: *Required Writing: Miscellaneous Pieces 1955-1982;* Farrar Straus Giroux; New York.

Philip Larkin is a rare thing among literary journalists—his own man. When he edited the *Oxford Book of Twentieth Century Verse,* he filled it with his own eccentric choices, many of them rhymed and often by uncelebrated poets. His own verse, as recent as it is, owes very little to most of the modern masters, unless we are willing to include Sir John Betjeman (as Larkin does) in the Pantheon. Larkin seems to have given up writing verse these days. On the other hand, he writes essays and reviews only under compulsion. *Required Writing* is an anthology of various pieces written over a period of nearly 30 years. They are as cranky and original as his verse or his taste in modern poetry.

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of Betjeman's greatness? Or an essay on Marvell from the perspective of his hometown, Hull? Larkin says what he likes and about what he likes with very little attention to the usual politics of the "arts." He can do this, partly because he early on decided to work for a living rather than depending on his earnings as a writer or the literary welfare state of grants, awards, and creative writing professorships. In his address "Subsidizing Poetry" he warns against the danger of a campus poet becoming a critic. By studying literature and teaching it, he will in the end be good for nothing except writing about books: "He will become obsessed with poems that are already in existence, instead of those it is his business to bring into being . . . ." The poet has to struggle with more than just his medium of words but with "the fundamental nexus between poet and audience." All the Arts Council grants, TV appearances, and university lectures succeed in doing is to eliminate that struggle: "The poet is paid to write, and the audience is paid to listen. Something vital goes out of their relation, and I am afraid that something vital goes out of poetry too." These are unwelcome sentiments. But Larkin is no more acceptable in his judgments on the sacred cows of modern art. He refers repeatedly to the three P's, the unholy trinity of modernism: Picasso, Pound, and Parker (Charlie), each the creator of an art which "helps us neither to enjoy nor endure." Modernism will "divert us as long as we are prepared to be mystified or outraged . . . it has no lasting power." He is even more offensive on the subject of America. Explaining why he wouldn't dare visit the U.S., because of his deafness, he told the *Paris Review:*

> Someone would say, What about Ashberry, and I'd say, I'd prefer strawberry . . . . I suppose everyone has his own dream of America. A writer once said to me, If you ever go to America, go either to the East Coast or the West Coast: the rest is a desert full of bigots. That's what I think I'd like: where if you help a girl trim a Christmas tree you're regarded as engaged, and her brothers start oiling their shotguns if you don't call on the minister. A version of pastoral.

If Larkin ever does come, he should be given the keys to Ft. Wayne, Indiana. □

IN FOCUS

Beyond the Norm—and Back

Frank Herbert: *Heretics of Dune;* G. P. Putnam's Sons; New York.

While waiting for the cinematic spectacle of *Dune,* we decided that a bit of exploratory work was in order, so we attended to Frank Herbert's world —nay, universes—of Dune. That was no small feat, as it is a trek into *Dune, Dune Messiah, Children of Dune, God Emperor of Dune,* and, finally, last but not least (like most of the others, it weighs in at over 400 pages), *Heretics of Dune.* It can be said that Middle Earth is a grain of sand compared with Herbert's creation, at least in its physical dimensions.

The *Dune* series is not escapist fiction. Herbert has some very sensible things to say about the abuses of politics, religion, and power; about the importance of tradition and respect; about many of the values that concern people here on Earth today, not merely on the planet Arrakis at some vague point in the future. Throughout the books Herbert presents the horrors of drug addiction (some "new-wave" SF writers treat drugs as a variation of milk). In *Heretics of Dune* he traces the perversion of love into sex into recreation into ashes. Describing a group of sex-and-power revolutionaries, Herbert writes: "Even when they wallowed in the performance of something that once had meant gratification, they would have to reach for new extremes just to touch the edges of their own memories." A disturbing question presents itself: Which has had a bigger effect on the general reading public: *Heretics of Dune* or the Vanessa Williams issue of *Penthouse?* Reflexive critics of SF ought to do a bit of sense searching. (SM) □

Useless Idiots

John P. Roche: *The History and Impact of Marxist-Leninist Organizational Theory: "Useful Idiots," "Innocents' Clubs," and "Transmission Belts";* Institute for Foreign Policy Analysis; Cambridge, MA.

The joke is as old as Marxism in power: Lenin (or Stalin or Khrushchev or Chernenko) shows his beautiful Crimean villa, his fleet of limousines, his army of servants, and his plush office to a relative who responds, "All very nice, but what if the communists ever take over?" John P. Roche, academic dean and professor of civilization and foreign affairs at Tufts University and a leading analyst of Marxist intrigue and aggression, knows why the "communists" will never take over. In *The History and Impact of Marxist-Leninist Organizational Theory,* Dr. Roche explains that as a philosophical construct "communism" is merely a rhetorical fig leaf, "an operational code for a new-style Mafia" who have never worried much about ideological consistency in their quest for absolute power. True believers in communism always end up in the Gulag or in a shallow grave when the Party triumphs. (Bukharin once commented that the Soviets have always believed in a two-party system: one in office, the other in jail.) This short history of the cynical opportunism of international communism makes it clear that, once ascendant, Marxists usually believe in *Das Kapital* the way many World Council of Churches leaders believe in the Bible—shut. Roche's study further shows that the same kind of doctrinal fecklessness coupled with elitist authoritarianism characterizes the contemporary American world of New Left think tanks and New Class narcissism. The posh radicals in Harvard Square and uptown Manhattan will not thank Professor Roche for his insights. □

Foreign Fiascoes

Jonathan Kwitny: *Endless Enemies: The Making of an Unfriendly World;* Congdon & Weed; New York.

During the formative years of the American republic, Alexander Hamilton proposed that a national debt would be beneficial since it would tie the wealthy, the lenders, to the fledgling government, the debtor. Hamilton doubtless would regard a

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trillion dollar national debt as too much of a good thing, but, just as he expected, those buying T-bills are hopeful that the government will survive to pay interest. Government debts to Americans become more problematic, however, when the debtor government is not our own but a foreign one, especially an unpopular foreign regime which prohibits free enterprise among its own citizens. Indeed in *Endless Enemies* Jonathan Kwitny, a reporter for the *Wall Street Journal*, shows how American investments and loans abroad have often artificially strengthened the position of authoritarian socialists. Such an analysis neatly turns on its head the usual leftist complaint that American foreign policy is bad because it impedes the emergence of socialism. American foreign policy fails, this study contends, because it creates the false dilemma of U.S.-sponsored socialism vs. Soviet-sponsored socialism. Free-market capitalism, Kwitny finds, is precisely what many American bankers, corporate executives, and diplomats seem unwilling to export. The ironic result has been widespread hostility against America for propping up decidedly un-American economies and governments.

Arguably Kwitny underestimates the role of communist aggression in world affairs. Nonetheless, his carefully researched book raises serious questions for Wall Street investors, Foggy Bottom strategists, and average American voters. □

WASTE OF MONEY

Misunderstanding Nazism

Saul Friedländer: *Reflections of Nazism: An Essay on Kitsch and Death;* Harper & Row; New York.

Why is it that intellectuals continue to brood over the extinct totalitarianism of nazism while ignoring or applauding its virulent twin, communism? In *Reflections of Nazism,* Saul Friedländer, professor of history at Tel Aviv University, offers yet another erudite analysis of national socialism by exploring the "new discourse" appearing in recent film, fiction, and scholarship. His study fails like many before it because of its blindness to the modernist and secularist continuities between German National Socialism (a label rarely used by Friedländer and his colleagues) and international Marxism.

Friedländer locates, perceptively enough, a fusion in nazism of love for superficial harmony and of attraction to the Void. The kitsch aesthetic of "homely cottages" is thus united with "the unfathomable world of myths... the lights of the apocalypse." In Friedländer's view, this combination created a "certain kind of religiosity" which is "pre- and antimodern." Nazism is in this respect "unlike Marxism, which reaches out to the society of tomorrow." Even under Stalin, Friedländer avers, communists have never *"venerated oppression and propagated apocalyptic visions."* (Characteristically, Friedländer counterposes "the Stalinist hell" with "the capitalist jungle." Let the beasts of the American "jungle" stop protecting Israel and subsidizing its ramshackle socialist economy for even a month and Israeli academicians will forget about sophisticated essays on nazism and will start learning a few Tarzan yells.)

But above all Hitler was a modernist utopian, not a "premodern or antimodern" thinker. As Friedländer himself admits, Hitler was the leader of "revolutionary modernization" in Germany's industry, and he spent many hours contemplating his model of the futurist imperial capital. The view that Hitler's "model of future society is only a reflection of the past" is simply not true. The invocations of the "pure Aryan race" had little to do with real German history. As their passion for eugenics reveals, national socialists, like Marxists, wanted a "new man."

What Friedländer and other leftists apparently find most distasteful about nazi utopianism is that it was the brainchild not of another intellectual like themselves but of a *petit bourgeois,* "an eternal adolescent: gauche, sprung from modest circumstances, never at ease in his polished shoes." "The dictatorship of the proletariat" is an elegant concept, fit for symposium discussion, but, please, let us have nothing to do with wallpaper hangers. At this point one sees clearly how correct Ernst Nolte was in *The Three Faces of Fascism* when he linked nazism and Marxism as fundamentally similar because of their shared "refusal of transcendence." This illuminating thesis, brushed aside as "too vaguely phrased" by Friedländer, explains why apocalypse assumes its modernist significance in both Marxism and national socialism. In Christianity, the end of the world is the inevitable prelude to New Jerusalem. The old world must pass away before the new heaven and earth can appear. The totalitarian vision promises instead a terrestrial utopia, nazi or communist, *or* annihilation. The goal is ideological supremacy or nothing.

The nihilism in communism has so far been less visible to world view than that in nazism because, unlike nazism, it has

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never been pushed to the wall the way the Germans were. But the current fusion in Soviet rhetoric of kitsch visions of global serenity, of reckless assertion of military strength, of anti-Semitism (renamed "anti-Zionism"), and of doommongering corresponds closely with what Friedländer finds in nazism. Blissful Finlandization or "The Day After" are the two options Moscow holds out.

For intellectuals such as Friedländer, "Nazism has become one of the supreme metaphors, that of Evil." Anyone who can see that "the socioeconomic conditions needed for the appearance of a Nazi-type phenomenon do not exist" and who lives in a country threatened by Soviet-backed terrorism should understand that it is time to update the metaphor. Scholars in Tel Aviv and elsewhere need to begin looking long and hard at those Kremlin leaders who, in aims, methods, and spirit, have never broken the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, and who seem to regard the Jewish role in history in exactly the same light as Goebbels and Himmler. □

Nest of Vipers

Simone de Beauvoir: ***Adieux: A Farewell to Sartre;*** Pantheon; New York.

by Thomas Molnar

It may hurt, but it is useful to know that in matters of foreign translations available at our publishers and bookstores, we live in a well-guarded ghetto. There are protective turrets in the ghetto's wall, called Sartre, Beauvoir, Günter Grass, Heinrich Böll, Luigi Barzini, and a few Latin American Marxist writers whose works are eagerly bought by U.S. publishers, regardless of the rubbish they concoct. They are the foreign equivalent of, say, Norman Mailer. Since publishers hardly ever buy the rights to other non-English language books, we must live in a near-total ignorance of the truly important works—essays, novels, scholarship—appearing abroad. Browsing in bookstores from Paris to Budapest, then in New York or Chicago, is to step from a developed to an underdeveloped country.

This much to greet the publication of another futile book, Beauvoir's farewell to Sartre. To anybody but the snob or the entomologist, the reading of these dreary memoirs and records or conversation is a waste of time. A pair of rich, comfort-loving *bourgeois*—the type they supposedly detested—are presented here by the more vicious member of the couple; the pages read as if they were written by a senile and dying British lord of the 19th century: both Simone and Jean-Paul are mostly drenched in whiskey, they hop from Montparnasse cafés, bars and restaurants to restaurants, bars and cafés on the Piazza Navona, with enthusiastic side-trips to Havana or Peking. On their circuit, they subvert, corrupt and revolutionize, mix with other culture-scum, and utter irrelevancies peddled as thought.

The book, 450 pages (one hopes the paper is recycled), consists of two parts. The first 127 pages is a "farewell," a detailed description of Sartre's last years, as this intellectual Pol Pot slipped into semi-coma, and only awoke to pronounce such profundities as: "I believe in illegality," or for Simone to say of him casually that "Sartre presided over the coal-mine strike." In the intervals of whiskeys and heavy doses of medication, Sartre helped to launch anarchistic and/or obscene magazines, visited the terror-murderer Baader in his German prison, and assisted other terrorists in their escape. The company the two kept reads like a mixture of streetgang and politburo: Cohn-Bendit, Alain Geismar, Gisèle Halimi, Klaus Croissant, Francis Jeanson, Benni Levi—all Maoists, extreme anarchists, assassins (or their defenders), derelict professors, agitators.

The second, longer part is the transcript of tape-recorded conversations the odd couple had in and out of luxury hotels, from 1974 on. Culture-snobs will salivate and devour these pages full of the master's intellectual tidbits. This justifies the publisher's investment—and what else is there to worry about? Why give other than financial thought to the elucubrations of these two intellectual monsters, as they cover subjects like Sartre's stealing, at 12, his mother's money (he was psychologically *wounded* when found out), his fear of making decisions (deciding is apparently not existentialist), his sexual appetites and exploits when young, mature, and old. I repeat that of the two, the woman is far more repulsive. She exclaims: "What! You had a sexual morality? That's pretty amusing!" Or: "Belief in God? Then one cannot be an independent man!"

For a cleansing cure, read or reread Solzhenitsyn's memoirs, *The Calf and the Oaktree.*

P.S. In 450 pages there is one passage that might save the rest. Some years ago I quoted those sentences in a *National Review* obituary of Sartre, and have been sorry ever since that readers interpreted the passage as proof of Sartre's last-minute "conversion." Here is the passage, quoted on p. 438: "I don't see myself [said Sartre] as so much dust that has appeared in the world, but as a being that was expected, prefigured, called forth. In short, as a being that could, it seems, come only from a creator; and this idea of a creating hand that created me refers me back to God. Naturally, this is not a clear, exact idea that I set in motion every time I think of myself. It contradicts many of my other ideas; but it is there, floating vaguely . . . ." I repeat here that these few sentences give the lie to Sartre's entire *oeuvre,* to the whole atheistic existentialism. Perhaps with another companion than this fanatic female, his thought would have taken a less destructive turn. □

Success by Association

Randa Dubnick: ***The Structure of Obscurity: Gertrude Stein, Language and Cubism;*** University of Illinois Press; Urbana.

Gertrude Stein may be the only official member of "The Lost Generation" who has not been disemboweled by literary analysts. Stein's circle—biographer James R. Mellow called it a "Charmed Circle" in the title of his 1974 book—was not restricted to Hemingway, Sherwood Anderson, and other literati. Gertie, as she was known to some of her pals, also supped with Henri Matisse and chummed around with Picasso.

Stein was, in a manner of speaking, a writer. For those who have been lucky enough to avoid her, ah-hem, prose, well, your time has run out, for here's a sample, a random choice from

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page 345 of her novel *The Making of Americans:*

> As I was saying there are two general kinds of them, the resisting, the attacking kind of them. There are two general kinds of them, there are many very many mixings in every one of some of all the kinds of them, in some of some of both the general kinds of them I know this now and now I will describe more of it.

That sort of thing goes on for nearly 600 more pages. And it should be noted that the Stein *oeuvre* also includes other books, plays, essays, lectures, and sundry language agglomerations

that issued from her pen. Stein's celebrity is a perfect example of the adage, "It's not what you know, but whom you know." One of her "theoretical" books is titled *How to Write.* The mere thought of it provokes queasiness.

Given the times, it's not particularly surprising to discover Stein as the subject for a scholar. In her *The Structure of Obscurity* Dr. Dubnick makes gestures at making Stein an artist in her own right, but she lapses back into a position wherein Stein's buddies —Picasso and Braque—serve as supports. Dubnick's objective is to make sense out of nonsense. Writing about Stein's writing, Dubnick proclaims, "But one *can* say with more certainty that her obscurity was a necessary consequence of her innovative approach as she created two different types of obscurity."

Oh, well. This sort of thing ought to get Dubnick a promotion. The really strange thing about Stein's style is that she is reputed to have been a gifted conversationalist. The clarity and simplicity of her talk is supposed to have influenced Hemingway's literary style. She may well illustrate—as Joyce does for Philip Larkin—the "declension from talent to absurdity." □

Notables

The Incomplete Man

Our time fancies itself as an era of unfinished personalities who wander through life inflicting harm, grief, and confusion upon the people they encounter. If they happen to be endowed with creative gifts, no matter how slender, they easily become cult figures and objects of succulent biographies. The fact is that this kind of incomplete person has been around since mankind's dawn: up until recently they lived in obscurity. Now they are made the object of striptease iconography—a profitable business for the arbiters of mass culture.

Whether James Agee can be classified as a prefabricated sacred relic *manqúe* is debatable. His recently published biography (Lawrence Bergreen: *James Agee: A Life;* E. P. Dutton; New York)—for all its wooden writing and Freudian clichés—portrays Agee as an unprepossessing, sometimes repelling, human incompleteness, redeemed only in part by his literary legacy. He certainly was an attention-commanding man of letters, an ideological naïf susceptible to conflicting tropisms, who was obviously propelled by emotional winds and hot air at the expense of his own creative potential. But he was also a dazzling phrase-coiner ("Why, all God's outdoors is a toilet . . ."; "the time that I lived . . . so successfully disguised to myself as a child . . ."; "[Journalism is] a broad and successful form of lying . . ."), which often landed in the near vicinity of a major insight.

What Mr. Bergreen successfully avoids is Agee's intercourse with that body of ideas and preferences which today have come to be known as American conservatism. Mr. Bergreen dutifully reports on Agee's flirtation with communism and radicalism; he also elaborates on his friendship with Whittaker Chambers. But the trite communism/anticommunism antithesis is not the clue to the mental and spiritual composition of a contemporary American intellectual. Bergreen quotes a paragraph from Agee, the historical eschatology of which is reminiscent of the catastrophic vision of Ortega y Gasset or, for that matter, Richard Weaver:

> I feel essentially I am of a dying and almost extinct species which may never become quite extinct and which almost certainly won't come to power again (and I'm not sure that matters) for centuries: a kind of semi-civilized descendant of the Greeks, through the Renaissance. I feel that my kind has had its time, and that the future (and for that matter the present) is in other hands, and on the whole I want no part of it, but believe in continuing to do my best for, and in, what I value, supposing that the best I can do is help keep alive, and to help pass on, dying and discredited ideas which I value above all others.

Only simpletons view the struggle against communism as a political one. Anyone familiar with Dostoevsky (and Agee was his ardent admirer) and Orwell, knows that the fight against doctrinaire social radicalism involves profound moral choices. As a serious writer of highly strung sensitivity and prodigious promise, Agee was aware of certain unequivocal evils nested in communism and radicalism, his own modish cultural cynicism notwithstanding. In a letter he confessed: "There are premonitions I superstitiously fear to write, but I will. . . . I will be killed after long torture . . . probably by Stalinists." Even as a piece of phantasmagoria, Agee's fears raise an obvious question: Why by Stalinists? What made Agee fret at such a possibility? There must have been some reason for this obsession, but Bergreen does not venture into such a potentially dangerous investigation of Agee's traumas. The whole motif of friendship between Agee and Chambers is treated with perfunctory discretion, fully servile to the dogmas of cultural officialdom, which only revives our old suspicion that in modern times a serious writer is conservative at heart—a circumstance that *must* be withheld from the American reading public. □

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Filming for Dollars

Leonard Mosley: *Zanuck: The Rise and Fall of Hollywood's Last Tycoon;* Little, Brown; Boston.

by Stephen Macaulay

Movies have not always been taken seriously as art. When Rudolph Arnheim 50 years ago compared film with painting, music, and literature, he was being deliberately controversial. It was a long road from the nickelodeon to artistic respectability. Today film no longer needs to be promoted as art. It simply *is* art; all of it is. As a result, we are entertained with learned discourses concerning the films of George Romero and John Carpenter, and about the sociocultural significance of toast and *The Rocky Horror Picture Show.*

One element that tends to be ignored—even in Marxist criticism— is that, by and large, movies are made to make a pile of dough that can be cooked into T-bills, oil leases, and various objects of conspicuous consumption. What makes Sammy run? Not art. Budd Schulberg, the creator of Sammy Glick, pointed out over 40 years ago that money is the prime—perhaps the only —motivator in Hollywood.

However, give a self-proclaimed Hollywood expert the following list, and he'll start hollering "art": *The Jazz Singer* (1927), *Little Caesar* (1931), *The Public Enemy* (1931), *I Am a Fugitive From a Chain Gang* (1932), *42nd Street* (1933), *Moulon Rouge* (1934), *Jesse James* (1939), *Young Mr. Lincoln* (1939), *Drums Along the Mohawk* (1939), *The Grapes of Wrath* (1940)—and the list could continue. But even with this partial program we have the first "talkie," Edward G. Robinson, James Cagney, Jean Harlow, Paul Muni, Ruby Keeler, Nunnally Johnson, Tyrone Power, Henry Fonda, and John Ford. The common element: movies produced by Darryl F. Zanuck.

Biographer Leonard Mosley figures Zanuck as "Hollywood's Last Tycoon." Yes, Zanuck endured until 1979; he lasted longer than Louis B. Mayer of M-G-M, the brothers Warner, Harry Cohn of Columbia Pictures, and Adolph Zukor of Paramount—but longevity alone does not turn a businessman into a visionary or a pioneer.

Throughout his long career, Zanuck's only concern was the bottom line. Movies didn't start having voice tracks to broaden the artistic possibilities of film: it was merely a gimmick that paid off. Zanuck didn't produce a series of gangster films in the 1930's because he was several jumps ahead of the school of *film noir;* audiences simply loved them. And although many venerate the efforts of director John Ford, it should be noted that Zanuck sliced, diced, and riced Ford's footage as he, DFZ, saw fit.

If the passing of Zanuck really does mean the end of an era and the extinction of a subspecies—well, I'd be sorrier to see the snail darter go. □

Reconstructing the Bostonians

***The Bostonians:* Directed by James Ivory; Screenplay by Ruth Prawer Ghabvala; Merchant-Ivory Production.**

by Herbert London

A popular film that is more than chewing gum for the mind is a rare treat, and a novel of power and poignancy, translated into a well-created film, is sheer bliss. *The Bostonians* is a love story about an archaic Southern man who falls in love with a beautiful feminist preacher who is simultaneously adored by her mentor, a rigid Back Bay feminist. It is no coincidence that Henry James selected a Southerner as his hero. For it is in this figure that James can portray the sensibilities of a feudal culture that still values romance and the felicities of courtship. In contrast stands the Massachusetts revolutionist whose cause is rooted only in modernism.

James offered a counterrevolutionary, commonsense plea for romance rather than war between the sexes and for the reassertion of individual will over redemptive causes. Although James recognized full well the lengths feminists would eventually reach in ventilating their ideological fervor, he was far more interested in the degradation of the human spirit through the revolutionary deed.

James was ahead of his time in diagnosing the ills of a nation of "long-haired men and short-haired women." The older feminist who acts as the "teacher" will go to any extreme to maneuver her naive soulmate ever more deeply into the pit of outrage. James's novel could be about any modern revolution where the faces in the crowd and the populist rhetoric are indistinguishable.

In the James Ivory film the feminist "teacher" (played by Vanessa Redgrave) has woven her future into the cause. Like any revolutionary, she is not interested in or even aware of what is natural. Nothing exists for her apart from what can be molded and shaped. People—especially her young pupil—are clay to be molded into the plinth for a new social edifice.

Time and again this story has been told as tradition is torn from the past by the revolutionary who uses indignation as a tool for "reconstruction." The word speaks volumes about the revolutionary's true goals: destroy before you rebuild; make the new world a *tabula rasa* on which you print your own unique message. A feminist cannot admit biological differences when her passion is equality. The political revolutionary cannot admit to justifiable class difference when distinctions are considered an enemy of the people. The revolutionary believes he can rewrite the past to his own specifications. But for the rest of us this vision evokes painful memories of Auschwitz, Kampuchea, the Gulag, the Stalinist trials, and all other systematic efforts to recast the human spirit into a

(continued on page 34)

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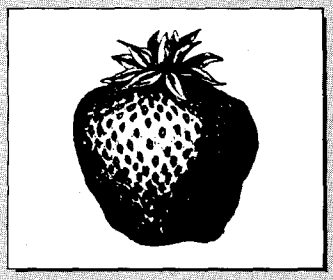
LIBERAL CULTURE

More Fun Than an Oil Spill

Sensual Cities, a publication dedicated to "rebuilding Los Angeles toward a balance with nature," has the last word on New Age garden parties—a field trip to the San Diego Center for Appropriate Technology.

> We lunched on steaming bread fresh from solar ovens, then toured the greenhouse and roof gardens. Upon entering the greenhouse, a soft peace envelops one. . . . Built entirely of recycled materials, the greenhouse is lush with food plants thriving in compost. On the roof we found solar ovens . . . solar hot water collectors . . . planters filled with beautiful lettuce, strawberries, and red chard. Back downstairs we gathered with local guests for slide shows. Jim outlined common ecological and economic crises, renamed high tech 'low tech,' since it fouls our environment. . . . After dinner Paul Glover presented a Citizen Planners slide show vision of an ecolonized Los Angeles! By this time we were in high excitement, discussing possibilities and dancing through the night. . . . Before we said our goodbyes we held hands in a circle while Paul, as a minister of the Universal Life Church, pronounced us all husbands and wives, mothers and fathers, brothers and sisters, daughters, sons, and lovers!



The next exciting event is billed as a "Compost Toilet Beach Party." (Psst! Don't touch the strawberries.) ☐

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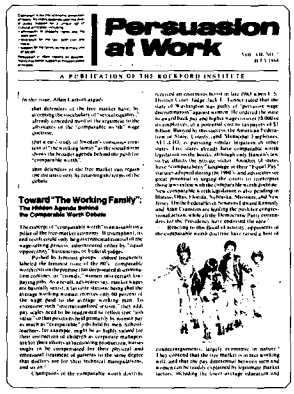
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(continued from page 32)
slave of the new social order.

Unfortunately for the film, no role that Vanessa Redgrave regards as her "most important" could entirely be true to Henry James. In the last scene, Ms. Ghabvala, the screenplay writer, attempts to recast the teacher into a sympathetic character. Faced with an angry audience that has paid to hear her inspired, but now departed, student speak, Ms. Redgrave goes to the podium —and after several halting starts— delivers an impassioned plea for feminism. This is a triumphant ending to what should have been a dismal and complete defeat. In Hollywood feminism is as close to a religion as we get. This gratuitous finale is hardly surprising. However, even with this fabricated ending the Jamesian message emerges—a lesson for revolutionaries who dismiss the past and become, consciously or not, the architects of social hell. The revolutionary is provided an excuse for destruction and an invitation to nihilism. Those who made *The Bostonians* into a film may have their own social agenda, but even they couldn't completely vitiate the universality of the Jamesian saga. □

CORRESPONDENCE

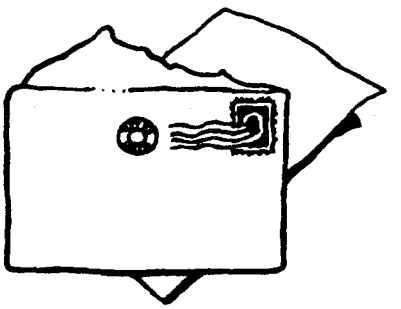
Letter from Budapest

by Thomas Molnar

Observation of intellectual life in Hungary today provides a fascinating picture of a nation living in two worlds and, in certain ways, profiting by both. "East" and "West" become suddenly realities, cultural as well as political. Soviet occupation has compelled the intellectuals to study Marxist writings, in fields where their Western colleagues, even the leftist ones, are completely uninformed. The quality of these works depends on the talent of the one who undertakes the analysis and the writing. They may be wooden imitations of Party directives, or they may offer an original way of looking at events. Often both Party and writers play safe, as witness the very large number of reprints from classical authors from Homer to Schelling, for which the modern authors write usually excellent introductions and explicatory notes. Marxist reevaluation of the classics is not included.

Dr. Molnar is on the faculty at the City University of New York and a visiting professor of religious studies at Yale University.

In regard to the writing of history, a delicate and risky exercise under Party scrutiny, I was struck by the revisionist interpretations by historian István Nemeskürthy of the peasant war in 1514 (the so-called Dózsa insurrection) and of the annihilation of the Second Hungarian Army in the Ukraine, in 1943. Although Nemeskürthy portrays the



Soviet side in flattering colors, his scholarship offers something new, not found in the earlier, "national/aristocratic" version. He interprets both crucial turns of history as the failure and blindness of upper classes who ignored popular and national interests. Not a word, of course, of the horrors and servitude into which the new leadership has led the nation.

Naturally, this is a purely Marxian way of writing history, but the style is lively and the psychological penetration independent of the Marxist-Leninist schema. In another analysis, János Rathmann's study of Herder, the clichés are more visible—the description of Herder, as pointing the way to historicism, thus to Hegel and Marx—yet scholarship there too is impeccable and the documentation vast, leaning mostly on East German sources.

These two rather widely differing cases suggest a skillful assimilation of Marxist tenets, without abandoning the canons of Western scholarship, mostly of German origin. This German orientation is a natural thing for most Hungarian scholars who, for historical reasons, have regarded Germany as providing the best models for works of erudition. The fact that their attitude has not changed since 1945 indicates that not Russia but the West remains the source and transmitter of culture. We may read it as a signal of future political realities: despite intense communist propaganda—by now more a nuisance than an intolerable interference with matters cultural—Hungarian scholarship remains firmly rooted in Western values, transforming Marxist roadblocks into roadsigns of Western orientation.

Insofar as Soviet erudition is at all integrated in Hungarian intellectual life, the works appearing in Moscow are mediated through German distribution. Germany has remained the central cultural storehouse of the entire East European area.

Sociology ought to be, in communist estimation, a *par excellence* Marxist discipline. To some extent it has become so in East Europe, where sociologists cannot ignore Russian and East German scholarship in this field. Yet, Hungary has developed its own sociological trends, with dissidents George Konrád and Gábor Hajnal as the standard-bearers. Elemér Hankiss and some of the *samizdat* sociologists also stand out in opposi-

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tion to the Party with their independent studies of local realities. Sociographers thus offer documentation of conditions that the regime cannot deny: drugs, drunkenness, and sex among early teenagers, the dreariness of life under ever-present control, the high rate of suicide and divorce, the official lies and corruption which poison the social atmosphere.

The work of Hungarian sociologists shows the nation-corrupting mechanisms that come into existence when power is overconcentrated and no individual responsibility is allowed. In sum, many Hungarian sociologists today have gotten rid of the "value-free" school of thought, and have found their primary role as defenders of the national community's interests, as spokesmen for its survival.

Clashes are inevitable with the Party, and the latter often yields ground. I witnessed, for example, an interview on television with three university deans (a position here much more prestigious and demanding than in America). Their analyses pinpointed the ills from which both students and the school system suffer. Perhaps nowhere in the West, ridden with political party strife and ideological bias, could such a free debate take place. The freedom of tone and expression of this interview was striking and refreshing because the deans contended only against one power, the Party, and not against myriad pressure groups, and because they represented only one interest, the nation's cultural survival. It may sound paradoxical, but the fact that all blame, from economy to illiteracy, may be laid at the Party's door, and that the accusers may refer to national (or linguistic, moral, or cultural) survival as the decisive motive contributes to a clearer debate than in societies plagued by the rule of lobbies.

East European freedom is notable in two areas: literature and film production. There is, naturally, a great amount of trash and a yet greater quantity of conformist writing. Yet, the merciless description and structural analysis of communist society and its hidden castes and classes, both in the "Stalin era" and after, is something that we are simply not accustomed to in the West. *We* have a slogan-ridden "protest literature" and protest films, written by intellectuals for intellectuals; *they* have brutal satires and exposés.

The novels of George Moldova, written in a sturdy, no-nonsense style, tell the story "as it was," the blatant injustices, the abuses, the privileges of Party Elite, the flatteries, the humiliations, and the tortures. Then there are films ridiculing the Party, its policies, its officials, its inhumanity. The setting in such novels and films is in a supposedly distant past, a generation ago; but authors and public know that this is also a literature of warning that *it* should not happen again, and that *it* in many respects is still going on. The ultimate nonidentification of the *it* creates, according to some, a stifling climate; according to others, a stimulating one. I think it is a question of talent for the "Aesopian mode of writing." The kind of semi-oppressive climate under which Hungarian writers labor at least teaches style, the economy of thought and expression—qualities rare among current American writers.

No tableau of cultural life is complete without discussion of the infrastructure which helps or hinders creativity. I mean by infrastructure the higher education, libraries and bookstores, study circles, intellectual exchange, art academies, drama schools, and also the relationship of writer or artist with the public. To these auxiliary factors is added, in totalitarian regimes, the relationship between writer and the regime's representatives.

The State (Party) is ever-present. I was browsing in a bookstore when batches of new books arrived. I gathered from the conversation between transporter and manager that the shipment had come from the State printer, approved by a Party comrade, himself under orders from comrades yet higher. The existence of this bureaucratic chain of command excludes the printing and distribution of books by respected East European dissidents or by Solzhenitsyn, Chesterton, Bernanos, Pascal, or Guardini. Also unavailable are books about entire disciplines and literatures, old and new: esoteric works, medieval scholasticism, non-Marxist anthropology, the

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latest in mythology, and many others.

Hungarian scholars may face a veto on books they publish or order from abroad. They then engage in long negotiations with the officialdom which may finally let the package pass or publication be approved. But at the price of how much annoyance! Scholars, film directors, artists are invited to lecture abroad. It is up to the Party to approve, refuse, or drag out matters. When it approves, there is often a *quid pro quo,* a humiliating scrutiny. By definition, the Party is reluctant to authorize controversial persons or *oeuvres.* On the other hand, it needs a favorable Western image and a favorable reception of Hungarian exports, whether textile products, films at the Cannes festival, or other palpable demonstrations of unimpeded creativity. It also needs to reassure its citizens that Hungary still belongs to the West, an important factor for the Hungarian psyche today. It is an indirect spiritual guarantee that the nation will not be absorbed by the limitless and amorphous Asia, whether called Byzantinism or Warsaw Pact. □

POLEMICS & EXCHANGES

Neutered Conservatism

by Jay Williamson

Reading the September comment, "The Conservative Humanitarian," brought to mind the old quip about "the bland leading the bland." A pastiche of unexceptional platitudes, felicitous quotes, and pious laments, Professor Steensma's essay depicts a "conservatism" that will offend no one—and help just as many. This is lap-dog conservatism: pet it and it wags its tail. Steensma tells us society must meet "directly and unequivocally the dangers facing it," but somehow he himself largely avoids this unpleasant task. So anxious is he not to give offense that he even grants that the liberal agenda —"racial and sexual discrimination, consumer rights, ecology"—should have long defined the "concerns of true conservatives."

But conservatives *are* conservatives precisely because they feel *other* concerns—the traditional family, moral and religious vitality, safety from foreign aggression, the unborn—much more strongly. Steensma speaks of "the emerging problems of society" that conservatives allegedly ignored. But who besides conservatives have said anything at all about the breakdown of the family, about 1.5 million abortions annually, about skyrocketing teenage suicide, about feckless public schools, or about the overall decline in cultural and moral standards? Perhaps, as Steensma says, "the blame for the present chaos cannot be placed only on the liberals," but conservatives are far from needing the kind of *mea culpa* he offers.

Glib talk about basing public philosophy upon "a consensus among thinking people" is also unwarranted. Insofar as there is a national intellectual consensus, it is still overwhelmingly liberal. It was, after all, on the basis of honoring the "consensus" that Governor Cuomo justified his faithless stance on abortion. Despite some electoral gains, conservatives are still an intellectual and cultural minority. They cannot simply go along with community opinion, politely applauding Alan Alda, Walter Cronkite, and Gloria Steinem as they lead us to destruction. Opposing widespread misconceptions is difficult, controversial, and unpopular. But retreating into *Bartlett's* for a few pleasant bromides is no tactic for "true conservatives." □

Mr. Williamson writes from Pleasant Grove, Utah.

Prof. Steensma Replies:

Dealing with Jay Williamson's innuendoes on my integrity, courage, and masculinity is easy (sticks and stones, shall we say?), but more difficult is trying to follow the murky flow of his argument. If my essay is a "pastiche of unexceptional platitudes, felicitous quotes, and pious laments" (Williamson's Roget is obviously well thumbed), his is a thicket of cranky sloganeering and stagey posturing whose theme is "Shove off, Jack, I'm on board." My comments about shop-and-till conservatives must have struck a raw nerve.

Mr. Williamson's comments are excellent examples of that shrill, self-righteous, spiritually petrified pseudo-conservatism that insulates itself in *ad hominem* cuteness while at the same time ignoring the ugly realities of our modern world and avoiding the action conservatives need to take to ameliorate them. Attacks on Alda, Cronkite, and Steinem, though well founded, are by now awfully stale, and scattergun attacks on the public schools are so indiscriminate that they are useless (and, by the way, there are some awful private schools); such remarks do little to advance the conservative cause. Lap-dogs are often innocuous, but yapping hounds are frequently dangerous.

Mr. Williamson is rightly angered and saddened, as most of us are, by the horrors of abortion, the breakdown of the family, and the moral and intellectual battering of our youth. But many of us are also deeply disturbed, as apparently he is not, by the godless racial and sexual bigotry, the rapacious materialism that is destroying not only our environment but also our family and social values, and the rampant dishonesty in certain segments of government, unionism, and business. Mr. Williamson seems to be rather selective in the choice of evils he

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attacks. Like the Pharisee, he'd rather not be inconvenienced and would rather pass by on the other side.

Well, enough. But two final points: I don't have to use Bartlett's (I don't own a copy, and I've taught Dryden, Burke, and Waugh for 25 years), and I've just retired after 35 years of enlisted and commissioned service in the United States Navy and Naval Reserve, two organizations which don't tolerate lapdogs and eunuchs. □

feminists, art for art's sake writers, bureaucratic generals, egalitarian republicans, and fat women—in fact, with just about everything that would become the 20th century. Hillaire Belloc and G. K. Chesterton imagined a social system straight out of the 12th century, and Belloc refused to drink anything invented after the Reformation. More recently in Britain you could point to Evelyn Waugh and Anthony Powell, while in America a good case could be made for the "nonliberal" vision of Peter DeVries.

Roy Blount is hardly a conservative, and he *is* sometimes offensive (so were Aristophanes and Rabelais) but he is also often funny. Your reviewers' failure to respond to the funny side of contemporary life is part of a larger failure: the inability to grasp the zaniness of the universe. I wonder if they can really be conservatives. □

Who Cares?

by Harry Zoylus

The anonymous reviewers at *Chronicles of Culture* don't seem to like anything except right-wing polemics. The problem is the usual plague of the self-righteous: they have no sense of humor. For them, Roy Blount Jr. is "a humorist of sorts." What's the worst thing that can be brought up against him? He wears makeup in the cover photo.

There is a big world out there, where men still engage in "sports, drinking, chopping wood . . . and sexual relations," although these subjects are obviously too earthy for the little puritans who review books. It's not so much Roy who is too much for them, as the reality of everyday life. Don't conservatives chop wood, drink bourbon, or make love? Don't they have any of what Roy calls "the crown jewels"?

The dismal prissiness of so many American conservatives is a modern phenomenon. We don't have to go back to Aristophanes or Juvenal or even Swift to find great humorists who were arch-reactionaries. Most brilliant comedy—and all great social satire—is intensely conservative, because it is a disgruntled response to the present's failure to live up to the standards of a mythical past. W. S. Gilbert managed to be offended at:

Mr. Zoylus writes from Whiskey Lake, Wisconsin.

The American Proscenium

Caveat Emptor

In Art, as in most areas of life, California is ahead of the rest of us. A new set of California laws, collectively known as "An Artist's Bill of Rights," prohibit the buyer of a work of art from making any alterations in that work without consent of the artist. According to a recent issue of *State of the Arts,* the official publication of the California Arts Council, buyers of art are beginning to feel the force of this new law. In one reported case, the owner of a painting is facing legal action for removing dollar bills that the artist had originally sewn to his canvas. The law allows the artist to sue the offending owner for "actual and punitive damages, attorneys' fees, expert witness' fees and injunctive relief."

It is hard to calculate the effect of such a law. For some time now, the serious arts have been divorced from the greater public. The books of new poets go unread, most new music goes unheard and even unplayed, and nobody much likes modern painting except the people whose lives depend upon it—painters and critics. It is easy to blame these developments upon the public's philistinism or (which comes closer) the artists' arrogance. Whatever the cause, few people regard paintings and verses as somehow their own. Art is something abstract, recherché, and recondite—accessible only to the initiated few. In California art is so etherealized, it is no longer even property.

If the California law catches on (remember Proposition 13?), no one will dare buy a work of art of any period. Lawyers being lawyers, we can expect to see briefs filed on behalf of Praxiteles and Michelangelo over the matter of certain fig leaves in the Vatican. □

Commedia dell'Arte

George Balanchine died a year ago April. Last July the Ballet Master of the New York City Ballet, John Taras, was finally persuaded by Mikhail Baryshnikov to join the American Ballet Theater. In a recent interview with *Dancemagazine,* Taras observed that with Balanchine gone "things will not be the same." How right he was. The New York City Ballet waited only a year and a half to dishonor the memory of their master. They recently sent to Italy a reduced company of dancers, bravely flying the Balanchine flag, in order to bolster the European reputation of the company. By all accounts, they could just as well have stayed home. The scaled-down productions put on in impossible locations were more like vaudeville than ballet. The most unintentionally surreal performance was given in an abandoned velodrome. Since the bleachers had been given over to plantings of trees and bushes, plastic chairs had to be brought

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in for seating. As *The Economist* described the effect, it was "more a giggle than a gig." This travesty of Balanchine's choreography was part of a celebration of the Italian Communist Party's *festa dell'unita.*

It's too bad Balanchine couldn't have been there to see it. Before his defection in 1924, he had danced in performances given for the party leadership in the Soviet Union. Waiting in the wings, he would hear snatches of fervent debates. To the end of his days, he used to entertain friends with his imitations of Trotsky. The aesthetic commissars of the U.S.S.R. were not ready for Balanchine's innovations in dance. Even in 1959 the chief choreographer of the Bolshoi arrogantly informed Balanchine that his work would be condemned back home as "mere formalism."

Balanchine loved his American home. The State Department had to work hard to convince him that it was his patriotic duty as an American citizen to take the company to the Soviet Union in 1962. The émigré's hostility to communism and to the Soviet regime was unbending. Throughout his successful tour, whenever he was hailed as a great Russian, he always responded—in pre-1917 Russian—with a denial. No, he was only an American. In his native city of St. Petersburg (now Leningrad) he was hailed as a conquering hero, a hometown boy who made good. He accepted the tribute—not for himself, he said, but on behalf of the United States and New York City.

Balanchine *was* a great American, a deeply religious man, and a militant anticommunist. The New York City Ballet's clowning for the Italian communists is worse than bad taste. The aims of the Italian Party are no different from those of their Russian brethren who drove and are still driving so many artists, musicians, writers, and dancers into exile. In putting itself at the service of the Party, the NYCB demonstrates once again the connection between artistic integrity and moral conscience: bad faith makes bad art. □

And the Winners Are . . .

In my opinion, the winners of the 1984 presidential election were:

President Reagan
liberalism
and
the conservative eggheads, with whom the Republican politicians are so ostentatiously impatient.

Faced with such judgment, a wise rabbi would caress his beard and say: "How come such disparate, even antithetical, elements could all win at the same time and place?" And that's a good question, which makes politics in today's America such a confusing, if not disturbing, spectacle.

President Reagan certainly won on his record, but part of his record is the asset of his smile: an endearingly all-American smile that conveys an impression of fortitude and conviction. There were others before Mr. Reagan who went a long way on their smiles: Clark Gable managed to turn his grin into a national emblem. The press has already tagged this unprecedented victory as a triumph of popularity. That is not exactly the case. Reagan won because, next to his substantial economic accomplishments, he effectively symbolized certain ideals, and longings, and emotions. Some of them were superficially articulated but at the same time were as hot as a branding iron pressed against the nation's flesh.

So the question is why did Reagan's coattails stretch no further than George Bush?

When America woke up on November 7th, the election, as seen by extreme partisans on both sides, could have been reduced to the defeat of the party of Sister Boom-Boom by the party of Brother Falwell. The entire nation—down to the stratum of the 18-year-olds—seemed permeated with a desire for a society profoundly different from what we inherited from the 1960's and 70's. Obviously, the nation in its mass voted against mindless liberationism whose consequence has been the moral and existential emptiness in the lives of, at least, one generation. Mr. Mondale somehow represented San Francisco and Mr. Reagan Lynchburg, Virginia. But the clarity of people's decision becomes blurred, if we try to pit the liberalism of the Democrats against the conservatism of the Republicans. Massachusetts reelected an unrepentant homosexual congressman who seduced a congressional page, while the voters of Illinois turned against a congressman guilty of a similar but more "normal" transgression, despite all his tears of repentance. Small things, perhaps, but they speak volumes about some vectors of our society that seem to be beyond the understanding of Republican conservatives.

So why does a nation whose instincts are behind Ronald Reagan all the way display, at the same time, such indifference to his catechism of fundamental, down-to-earth values? Why does ideological liberalism remain the big winner by thwarting all the efforts to initiate a *different* society? Why is liberalism still so potent as to be able to give the moribund Democratic Party a galvanizing shot and save it from being

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Out of the Closet, Into the Street

For years the editors of *Christianity and Crisis* have done their best to make friends with the international left, even to the point of adjusting or ignoring inconvenient doctrines. Despite these efforts, *The Nation* recently took aim at all (not just conservative) religionists and fired a broadside entitled "Political Opium." *C&C*'s soul-searching response:

> What's the point? On many issues and in much of its content, *The Nation* projects a vision of the just and caring society that we (and, we believe, the editors of *Commonweal, Sojourners, The Christian Century, National Catholic Reporter,* etc., along with the leaders and staffs of major Jewish and Christian organizations) find attractive. We push many of the same causes and fight the same kind of enemies—in Central America, South Africa, the Middle East, on the environment, the rights of women and minorities, school prayer, the death penalty, the arms race, superpower relationships. . . . Nobody asks the editors of *The Nation* to genuflect before our beliefs; but why spit on them? Are we the enemy?

"Verily, I say unto you, they have their reward" (Matt. 6:5). □

decisively defeated in the political arena?

Part of the answer lies in what Rep. Jack Kemp said on the election night during a brief interview: during the long months of his campaigning for Republican candidates all over the country, he found the Democrats sounding just like Republicans on almost every issue. He may be right, but the question remains: *Why* did they and how could they sound so much like the Republicans? Did they score a major upset by preempting *something* terribly important which by dint of history and common sense did not belong to them? Did a fraud decide the outcome of the struggle?

The fact is that neither Reagan nor his Republicans were able to give an ideological identity to questions of foreign policy or to issues which they called—so naively—"social." As a result, every Democrat in the field could wrap himself in borrowed ideological finery that clearly did not belong to him or her. Whenever they wanted to strike a patriotic pose, or espouse fiscal conservatism, or refute the excesses of feminism, or rant about "real" military strength—they could do so easily because liberalism has assumed an astonishing flexibility now so evident among bright liberal columnists and scholars and aggressively liberal TV anchormen and commentators. The Republicans were miserably deficient in the cultural sophistication which might have enabled them to defend their own ideological advantage—summed up so obviously (if simplistically) in the President's image. Anyone who happened to watch James Baker, the White House Chief of Staff, during his few minutes on CBS would detect immediately where the weakness lies: the Republicans approach politics as a supreme value in itself. All Mr. Baker could talk about was another cosmetic administration, mired ankle-deep in the priorities of purebred politicians.

It can be argued that the Reagan landslide may have historical consequences. Big upturns are often originated by commanding personalities whose symbolism succeeds in transforming the popular mind and refurbishing the national spirit. However, if such a personality actually introduces a *new* set of notions, they must derive from solid intellectual effort, that is, if they are to escape the revolving door of cultural trends.

And here is where those who try to give conservatism its intellectual dimension come in. For years, they have observed that the Republican message is pathetically shallow, unable even to buoy up an ideology, much less a ship of state. The Party requires a meticulously and patiently carved basis of scholarly support. The "new patriotism" of the Republicans rings with a sort of, by now, antique shrillness. It is hardly a proposition on which to base a meaningful restoration of the national ethos. The Republicans' social pluralism and notions of justice and fairness are awkward and derivative; their manifestations of religiousness unrefined and without depth; their antifeminism limited to a few embarrassing slogans. For years, we have voiced the supreme necessity of a coherent public philosophy that would efficiently translate intellectual theories and moral concerns into political language and practice. We are quite positive that, at this point of history, American conservatism badly needs its Jeffersons and Madisons, but before they arrive, it needs even more its Lockes and Burkes, who, in a new and inimitable way, would be able to teach politicians how to think.

—Leopold Tyrmand

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